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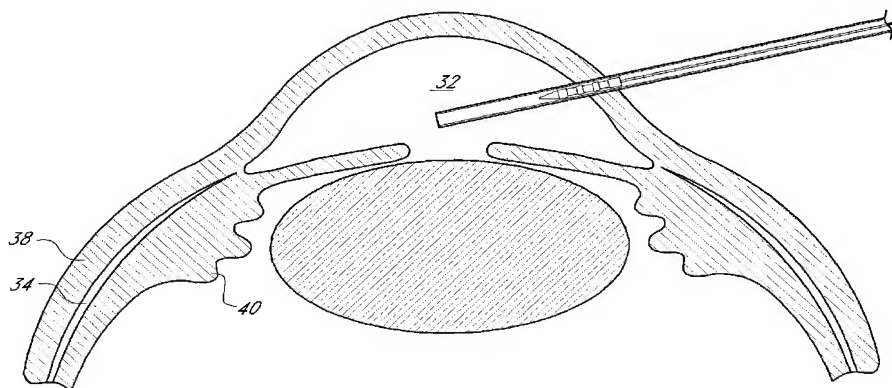
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(54) Title: UVEOSCLERAL SHUNT AND METHODS FOR IMPLANTING SAME



(57) Abstract: Devices and methods for treating intraocular pressure are disclosed. The devices include shunts for draining aqueous humor from the anterior chamber to the uveoscleral outflow pathway, including the supraciliary space and the suprachoroidal space. The shunts are preferably implanted by ab interno procedures.



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UVEOSCLERAL SHUNT AND METHODS FOR IMPLANTING SAME

RELATED CASES

[0001] This application claims priority and the benefit under 35 U.S.C. §119(e) to Provisional Patent Applications Serial No. 60/857,872, filed November 10, 2006, Serial No. 60/880,091, filed January 11, 2007, Serial No. 60/890,610, filed February 19, 2007, and Serial No. 60/947,942, filed July 3, 2007. Each of these disclosures is hereby incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

[0002] This disclosure relates to reducing intraocular pressure within the eye. This disclosure also relates to a treatment of glaucoma and/or other ocular disorders wherein aqueous humor is permitted to flow out of an anterior chamber of the eye through a surgically implanted pathway.

Description of the Related Art

[0003] A human eye is a specialized sensory organ capable of light reception and is able to receive visual images. Aqueous humor is a transparent liquid that fills at least the region between the cornea, at the front of the eye, and the lens. A trabecular meshwork, located in an anterior chamber angle, which is formed between the iris and the cornea, normally serves as a drainage channel for aqueous humor from the anterior chamber so as to maintain a balanced pressure within the anterior chamber of the eye.

[0004] About two percent of people in the United States have glaucoma. Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases encompassing a broad spectrum of clinical presentations, etiologies, and treatment modalities. Glaucoma causes pathological changes in the optic nerve, visible on the optic disk, and it causes corresponding visual field loss, resulting in blindness if untreated. Lowering intraocular pressure is the major treatment goal in all glaucomas.

[0005] In glaucomas associated with an elevation in eye pressure (intraocular hypertension), the source of resistance to outflow is mainly in the trabecular meshwork. The

tissue of the trabecular meshwork normally allows the aqueous humor (hereinafter referred to as "aqueous") to enter Schlemm's canal, which then empties into aqueous collector channels in the posterior wall of Schlemm's canal and then into aqueous veins, which form the episcleral venous system. Aqueous is continuously secreted by a ciliary body around the lens, so there is a constant flow of aqueous from the ciliary body to the anterior chamber of the eye. Pressure within the eye is determined by a balance between the production of aqueous and its exit through the trabecular meshwork (major route) and uveoscleral outflow (minor route). The portion of the trabecular meshwork adjacent to Schlemm's canal (the juxtacanalicular meshwork) causes most of the resistance to aqueous outflow.

[0006] While a majority of the aqueous leaves the eye through the trabecular meshwork and Schlemm's canal, it is believed that about 10 to about 20 percent of the aqueous in humans leaves through the uveoscleral pathway. The degree with which uveoscleral outflow contributes to the total outflow of the eye appears to be species dependent. As used herein, the term "uveoscleral outflow pathway" is to be given its ordinary and customary meaning to a person of ordinary skill in the art (and it is not to be limited to a special or customized meaning), and refers without limitation to the space or passageway whereby aqueous exits the eye by passing through the ciliary muscle bundles located angle of the anterior chamber and into the tissue planes between the choroid and the sclera, which extend posteriorly to the optic nerve. From these tissue planes, it is believed that the aqueous travels through the surrounding scleral tissue and drains via the scleral and conjunctival vessels, or is absorbed by the uveal blood vessels. It is unclear from studies whether the degree of physiologic uveoscleral outflow is pressure-dependent or pressure-independent. As used herein, the term "supraciliary space" is to be given its ordinary and customary meaning to a person of ordinary skill in the art (and it is not to be limited to a special or customized meaning), and refers without limitation to the portion of the uveoscleral pathway through the ciliary muscle and between the ciliary body and the sclera, and the term "suprachoroidal space" is to be given its ordinary and customary meaning to a person of ordinary skill in the art (and it is not to be limited to a special or customized meaning), and refers without limitation to the portion of the uveoscleral pathway between the choroid and sclera. Although it is not completely understood, some studies have suggested

that there may be a “compact zone” of connective tissue associated with the junction between the retina and ciliary body, known as the ora serrata. This “compact zone” may act as a site of resistance along the uveoscleral outflow pathway. The ora serrata can vary in length from about 5.75 mm to 7.5 mm nasally to about 6.5 mm to about 8.5 mm temporally. Other studies suggest that the ciliary muscle bundles are the primary site of resistance.

[0007] Certain therapeutic agents have been shown to reduce intraocular pressure by increasing uveoscleral outflow, but the mechanism by which uveoscleral outflow is increased is unclear. Some studies have suggested that relaxation of the ciliary muscle may reduce resistance through the ciliary muscle bundles to increase flow. Other studies suggest that dilation of the post-capillary venules or constriction of the pre-capillary arterioles may reduce downstream fluid pressure and increase uveoscleral outflow.

[0008] Glaucoma is broadly classified into two categories: closed-angle glaucoma, also known as angle closure glaucoma, and open-angle glaucoma. Closed-angle glaucoma is caused by closure of the anterior chamber angle by contact between the iris and the inner surface of the trabecular meshwork. Closure of this anatomical angle prevents normal drainage of aqueous from the anterior chamber of the eye. Open-angle glaucoma is any glaucoma in which the exit of aqueous through the trabecular meshwork is diminished while the angle of the anterior chamber remains open. For most cases of open-angle glaucoma, the exact cause of diminished filtration is unknown. Primary open-angle glaucoma is the most common of the glaucomas, and is often asymptomatic in the early to moderately advanced stages of glaucoma. Patients may suffer substantial, irreversible vision loss prior to diagnosis and treatment. However, there are secondary open-angle glaucomas that may include edema or swelling of the trabecular spaces (e.g., from corticosteroid use), abnormal pigment dispersion, or diseases such as hyperthyroidism that produce vascular congestion.

[0009] All current therapies for glaucoma are directed toward decreasing intraocular pressure. Currently recognized categories of drug therapy for glaucoma include but are not limited to: (1) Miotics (e.g., pilocarpine, carbachol, and acetylcholinesterase inhibitors), (2) Sympathomimetics (e.g., epinephrine and dipivalylepinephrine), (3) Beta-blockers (e.g., betaxolol, levobunolol and timolol), (4) Carbonic anhydrase inhibitors

(c.g., acetazolamide, methazolamide and ethoxzolamide), and (5) Prostaglandins (e.g., metabolite derivatives of arachidonic acid). Medical therapy includes topical ophthalmic drops or oral medications that reduce the production of aqueous or increase the outflow of aqueous. However, drug therapies for glaucoma are sometimes associated with significant side effects. The most frequent and perhaps most serious drawback to drug therapy, especially the elderly, is patient compliance. Patients often forget to take their medication at the appropriate times or else administer eye drops improperly, resulting in under- or overdosing. Patient compliance is particularly problematic with therapeutic agents requiring dosing frequencies of three times a day or more, such as pilocarpine. Because the effects of glaucoma are irreversible, when patients dose improperly, allowing ocular concentrations to drop below appropriate therapeutic levels, further permanent damage to vision occurs. Furthermore, current drug therapies are targeted to be deposited directly into the ciliary body where the aqueous is produced. And current therapies do not provide for a continuous slow-release of the drug. When drug therapy fails, surgical therapy is pursued.

[0010] Surgical therapy for open-angle glaucoma consists of laser trabeculoplasty, trabeculectomy, and implantation of aqueous shunts after failure of trabeculectomy or if trabeculectomy is unlikely to succeed. Trabeculectomy is a major surgery that is widely used and is augmented with topically applied anticancer drugs, such as 5-fluorouracil or mitomycin-C to decrease scarring and increase the likelihood of surgical success.

[0011] Approximately 100,000 trabeculectomies are performed on Medicare-age patients per year in the United States. This number would likely increase if ocular morbidity associated with trabeculectomy could be decreased. The current morbidity associated with trabeculectomy consists of failure (10-15%); infection (a life long risk of 2-5%); choroidal hemorrhage, a severe internal hemorrhage from low intraocular pressure, resulting in visual loss (1%); cataract formation; and hypotony maculopathy (potentially reversible visual loss from low intraocular pressure). For these reasons, surgeons have tried for decades to develop a workable surgery for reducing intraocular pressure.

[0012] The surgical techniques that have been tried and practiced are goniotomy/trabeculotomy and other mechanical disruptions of the trabecular meshwork, such

as trabeculopuncture, goniophotoablation, laser trabecular ablation, and goniosurrectomy. These are all major operations and are briefly described below.

[0013] Goniotomy and trabeculotomy are simple and directed techniques of microsurgical dissection with mechanical disruption of the trabecular meshwork. These initially had early favorable responses in the treatment of open-angle glaucoma. However, long-term review of surgical results showed only limited success in adults. In retrospect, these procedures probably failed due to cellular repair and fibrosis mechanisms and a process of “filling in.” Filling in is a detrimental effect of collapsing and closing in of the created opening in the trabecular meshwork. Once the created openings close, the pressure builds back up and the surgery fails.

[0014] Q-switched Neodymium (Nd) YAG lasers also have been investigated as an optically invasive trabeculopuncture technique for creating full-thickness holes in trabecular meshwork. However, the relatively small hole created by this trabeculopuncture technique exhibits a filling-in effect and fails.

[0015] Goniophotoablation is disclosed by Berlin in U.S. Pat. No. 4,846,172 and involves the use of an excimer laser to treat glaucoma by ablating the trabecular meshwork. This method did not succeed in a clinical trial. Hill et al. used an Erbium YAG laser to create full-thickness holes through trabecular meshwork (Hill et al., *Lasers in Surgery and Medicine* 11:341-346, 1991). This laser trabecular ablation technique was investigated in a primate model and a limited human clinical trial at the University of California, Irvine. Although ocular morbidity was zero in both trials, success rates did not warrant further human trials. Failure was again from filling in of surgically created defects in the trabecular meshwork by repair mechanisms. Neither of these is a viable surgical technique for the treatment of glaucoma.

[0016] Goniosurrectomy is an “ab interno” (from the inside), mechanically disruptive technique that uses an instrument similar to a cyclodialysis spatula with a microcurette at the tip. Initial results were similar to trabeculotomy: it failed due to repair mechanisms and a process of filling in.

[0017] Although trabeculectomy is the most commonly performed filtering surgery, viscocanalostomy (VC) and nonpenetrating trabeculectomy (NPT) are two new

variations of filtering surgery. These are “ab externo” (from the outside), major ocular procedures in which Schlemm’s canal is surgically exposed by making a large and very deep scleral flap. In the VC procedure, Schlemm’s canal is cannulated and viscoelastic substance injected (which dilates Schlemm’s canal and the aqueous collector channels). In the NPT procedure, the inner wall of Schlemm’s canal is stripped off after surgically exposing the canal.

[0018] Trabeculectomy, VC, and NPT involve the formation of an opening or hole under the conjunctiva and scleral flap into the anterior chamber, such that aqueous is drained onto the surface of the eye or into the tissues located within the lateral wall of the eye. These surgical operations are major procedures with significant ocular morbidity. When trabeculectomy, VC, and NPT are thought to have a low chance for success, a number of implantable drainage devices have been used to ensure that the desired filtration and outflow of aqueous through the surgical opening will continue. The risk of placing a glaucoma drainage device also includes hemorrhage, infection, and diplopia (double vision).

[0019] All of the above embodiments and variations thereof have numerous disadvantages and moderate success rates. They involve substantial trauma to the eye and require great surgical skill in creating a hole through the full thickness of the sclera into the subconjunctival space. The procedures are generally performed in an operating room and involve a prolonged recovery time for vision. The complications of existing filtration surgery have prompted ophthalmic surgeons to find other approaches to lowering intraocular pressure.

[0020] Because the trabecular meshwork and juxtacanalicular tissue together provide the majority of resistance to the outflow of aqueous, they are logical targets for surgical removal in the treatment of open-angle glaucoma. In addition, minimal amounts of tissue need be altered and existing physiologic outflow pathways can be utilized. Some procedures bypass the trabecular meshwork and juxtacanalicular tissue to drain fluid to physiologic outflow channels. However, in severe cases, it has been found that these procedures do not sufficiently reduce intraocular pressure.

[0021] As reported in Arch. Ophthalmol. (2000) 118:412, glaucoma remains a leading cause of blindness, and filtration surgery remains an effective, important option in

controlling glaucoma. However, modifying existing filtering surgery techniques in any profound way to increase their effectiveness appears to have reached a dead end.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0022] A need exists for an extended, site-specific treatment method for placing a drainage implant (preferably by an ab interno implantation procedure) for diverting aqueous humor in an eye from the anterior chamber to a location within the eye that will permit further reduction of intraocular pressure. One such location disclosed herein is the uveoscleral outflow pathway, which comprises the supraciliary space and/or the suprachoroidal space. In some embodiments of the present disclosure, a method is provided for implanting a drainage implant ab interno in an eye to divert aqueous humor from the anterior chamber to the supraciliary space.

[0023] In accordance with some embodiments of the present invention, a method for reducing intraocular pressure in an eye of a mammal (e.g., human) is provided, comprising introducing an ocular implant into the anterior chamber of the eye, the ocular implant having proximal and distal ends, cutting eye tissue using a distal portion of the implant at a location posterior of a scleral spur of the eye, advancing the implant from the anterior chamber into the cut eye tissue such that the distal end is located in the suprachoroidal space and the proximal end is located in the anterior chamber, and conducting aqueous humor between the proximal and distal ends of the implant.

[0024] An ocular implant is disclosed in accordance with some embodiments of the present invention. In some embodiments, the implant comprises a substantially straight, rigid, generally cylindrical body of a length no greater than 7 mm, preferably not greater than about 5 mm, and more preferably not greater than about 4 mm and not shorter than about 2 mm. The body has a tip that narrows toward an end, at least one inlet communicating with at least one inner lumen that terminates at one or more outlets. The lumen is of a sufficient length to extend from an anterior chamber to a suprachoroidal space of an eye. Means are provided for regulating fluid flow through the lumen.

[0025] A method for regulating intraocular pressure is disclosed in accordance with some embodiments of the present invention. In some embodiments, the method

comprises placing an elongated implant in eye tissue with an inlet in an anterior chamber and an outlet in a uveoscleral outflow pathway of an eye, and utilizing intraocular pressure to apply a force to move a valve surface within the implant in a direction transverse to a longitudinal axis of the implant such that aqueous humor flows from the anterior chamber to the uveoscleral outflow pathway at intraocular pressures greater than a threshold pressure.

[0026] An intraocular implant is disclosed in accordance with some embodiments of the present invention. In some embodiments, the intraocular implant comprises an inlet portion that provides an ingress flow path comprising one or more influent openings that have a total cross-sectional flow area and communicate with an interior chamber within the implant, an outlet portion providing an egress flow path comprising one or more effluent openings, and a pressure regulation valve having a deflectable plate or diaphragm with a surface area exposed to fluid within the interior chamber. The surface area is substantially greater than the total cross-sectional flow area. The valve is disposed between the interior chamber and the one or more effluent openings such that movement of the deflectable plate regulates flow from the interior chamber to the one or more effluent openings. The plate extends in a direction generally parallel to the inlet flow path and to the outlet flow path.

[0027] A method of performing surgery to lower intraocular pressure of an eye is disclosed in accordance with some embodiments of the present invention. In some embodiments, the method comprises providing an opening into an anterior chamber of the eye, inserting an instrument into the anterior chamber through said opening to perform a cataract extraction from the eye, providing an ocular implant having an inflow portion in fluid communication with an outflow portion, transporting the ocular implant from the opening through the anterior chamber of the eye to the anterior chamber angle of the eye, positioning the ocular implant such that the inflow portion of the ocular implant is positioned in the anterior chamber and the outflow portion of the ocular implant is positioned in the suprachoroidal space, and permitting aqueous humor to flow from the anterior chamber of the eye through the inflow portion of the ocular implant to the outflow portion of the ocular implant and into the suprachoroidal space of the eye.

[0028] A system for treating an ocular disorder in a patient is disclosed in accordance with some embodiments of the present invention. In some embodiments, the

system comprises a drainage implant which, following implantation at an implantation site, conducts fluid from the anterior chamber to a uveoscleral outflow pathway, such as the supraciliary space and a delivery instrument for implanting the drainage implant. The instrument has a distal end sufficiently sharp to penetrate eye tissue at an insertion site near the limbus of the patient's eye, and is sufficiently long to advance the implant transocularly from the insertion site across the anterior chamber to the implantation site. The instrument also has a sufficiently small cross section such that the insertion site self seals without suturing upon withdrawal of the instrument from the eye. The instrument comprises a plurality of members longitudinally moveable relative to each other and a seal between the members to prevent aqueous humor from passing between the members proximal the seal when the instrument is in the eye.

[0029] A system for treating an ocular disorder in a patient is disclosed in accordance with some embodiments of the present invention. In some embodiments, the system comprises a shunt that includes a central lumen that terminates at an outlet opening at a distal end of the shunt and a delivery instrument for implanting the shunt. The shunt further includes a transitional region that continually decreases in the radial dimension toward the distal end. The shunt also has a sufficient length such that, following implantation at an implantation site, the lumen conducts fluid from the anterior chamber to a uveoscleral outflow pathway of an eye. The delivery instrument comprises an outer needle, an implantation member and a trocar. The outer needle has a distal end sufficiently sharp to penetrate eye tissue at an insertion site near the limbus of the patient's eye. The implantation member is sufficiently long to advance the shunt transocularly from the insertion site across the anterior chamber to the implantation site, and is movable along an axis of the delivery instrument. The trocar cooperates with the implantation member and is movable relative to the implantation member. The trocar is sized to extend through the central lumen of the shunt and has a distal portion that narrows toward a distal end of the trocar. The distal end of the trocar is rounded.

[0030] A method for treating glaucoma is disclosed in accordance with some embodiments of the present invention. In some embodiments, the method comprises forming an incision in eye tissue located near the limbus of the eye, introducing a delivery instrument

through the incision, the delivery instrument carrying a drainage device, implanting the drainage device in eye tissue at a location posterior of a scleral spur of the eye, without introducing a viscoelastic material into the anterior chamber, to establish a flow path for aqueous humor from the anterior chamber to a physiologic outflow path, and withdrawing the delivery instrument from the eye, wherein the incision is sufficient small that it is self-sealing once the delivery instrument is withdrawn.

[0031] A method for lowering intraocular pressure in a patient having at least one ocular shunt implanted in the trabecular meshwork to drain aqueous humor from the anterior chamber towards Schlemm's canal is disclosed in accordance with some embodiments of the present invention. In some embodiments, the method comprises introducing a drainage device through tissue adjacent the limbus into the anterior chamber, advancing the drainage device across the anterior chamber to a location near the scleral spur, and implanting the drainage device in eye tissue at a location spaced from the at least one ocular shunt and the trabecular meshwork to establish a flow path from the anterior chamber towards the suprachoroidal space.

[0032] A further aspect of the invention involves a system for treating glaucoma. The system comprises a plurality of implants, each implant has a distal end sufficiently sharp to extend through tissue into a physiologic outflow pathway, and an instrument that has a chamber in which the implants are loaded for serial delivery into eye tissue. At least a first implant of the plurality of implants includes a recess that is sized to receive a distal end of a second implant of the plurality of implants. The recess is shaped so that with the implants contacting each other when placed in tandem in the instrument, the distal end of the second implant does not bear against the first implant.

[0033] Further aspects, features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the detailed description of the preferred embodiments of ocular implants, methods of implantation, and treatment courses that follow.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0034] These and other features, aspects, and advantages of the present disclosure will now be described with reference to the drawings of embodiments, which embodiments are intended to illustrate and not to limit the disclosure.

[0035] Figure 1 illustrates a schematic cross-sectional view of an eye with a delivery device containing an implant being advanced across the anterior chamber.

[0036] Figure 2 illustrates a schematic cross-sectional view of an eye with a delivery device being advanced adjacent the anterior chamber angle. The size of the shunt is exaggerated for illustration purposes.

[0037] Figure 3 illustrates a schematic cross-section view of an eye with a delivery device implanting an implant that extends between the anterior chamber and the uveoscleral outflow pathway.

[0038] Figure 4 illustrates a drainage implant in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein.

[0039] Figure 5 illustrates another drainage implant in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein.

[0040] Figure 6 illustrates another drainage implant in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein.

[0041] Figure 7 illustrates another drainage implant in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein including a core extending through a lumen of the implant.

[0042] Figure 8 illustrates the implant of Figure 7 with the core removed from the lumen of the implant.

[0043] Figure 9 illustrates another drainage implant in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein including a ball-check pressure regulator.

[0044] Figure 10 illustrates an exploded view of the implant of Figure 9.

[0045] Figure 11 illustrates another drainage implant in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein.

[0046] Figure 12 illustrates an exploded view of the implant of Figure 11.

[0047] Figure 13 illustrates another drainage implant in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein.

[0048] Figure 14 illustrates an exploded view of the implant of Figure 13.

[0049] Figure 15 illustrates a cross-sectional view of one embodiment of a delivery device with an implant extending therefrom.

[0050] Figure 16 illustrates a perspective view of another embodiment of a delivery device.

[0051] Figure 17 illustrates a schematic cross-sectional view of an eye with another delivery device being advanced across the anterior chamber.

[0052] Figure 18 illustrates a schematic cross-sectional view of an eye with another delivery device being advanced across the anterior chamber.

[0053] Figure 19 illustrates a cross-sectional view of another drainage implant in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein.

[0054] Figure 20 illustrates a perspective view of another drainage implant in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein.

[0055] Figure 21 illustrates a cross-sectional view of another embodiment of a delivery device.

[0056] Figure 22 illustrates another delivery device in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein.

[0057] Figures 23A-B illustrates side views of the delivery device of Figure 22.

[0058] Figure 24 illustrates another delivery device in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein.

[0059] Figure 25 illustrates a cross-sectional view of another drainage implant in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein.

[0060] Figures 26A-C illustrates another drainage implant in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein including a cap.

[0061] Figures 27A-C illustrates another drainage implant in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein including a flexible portion.

[0062] Figures 28A-B illustrates a reed-type valve in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein.

[0063] Figure 29 illustrates another delivery device in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein.

[0064] Figure 30 illustrates a cross-sectional view of another embodiment of a delivery device.

[0065] Figure 31 illustrates a cross-sectional view of another embodiment of a delivery device.

[0066] Figure 32 illustrates a cross-sectional view of another embodiment of a delivery device.

[0067] Figure 33 illustrates a cross-sectional view of another embodiment of a delivery device and an associated shunt.

[0068] Figures 34A and 34B are cross-sectional views of a shunt with side ports.

[0069] Figure 35 is a cross-sectional view of another embodiment of a shunt with side ports.

[0070] Figure 36 is a cross-sectional view of another embodiment of a shunt with side ports.

[0071] Figures 37A and 37B illustrate cross-sectional views of other drainage implants in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein.

[0072] Figure 38 illustrates a cross-sectional view of another drainage implant in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein.

[0073] Figure 39 is a perspective view of an implant configured in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention.

[0074] Figures 40A and 40B illustrate sectional views of the implant of Figure 39 and an associated drainage implant as implanted into any eye in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein.

[0075] Figures 41A to 41H illustrate cross-sectional views of other drainage implants in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein.

[0076] Figures 42A to 42D illustrate cross-sectional views of other drainage implants in accordance with embodiments disclosed herein.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0077] An ophthalmic implant system is provided that comprises a shunt and a delivery instrument for implanting the shunt. While this and other systems and associated methods are described herein in connection with glaucoma treatment, the disclosed systems and methods can be used to treat other types of ocular disorders in addition to glaucoma.

[0078] The shunt, following implantation at an implantation site, drains fluid from the anterior chamber into a physiologic outflow space. In some embodiments, the shunt is configured to provide a fluid flow path for draining aqueous humor from the anterior chamber of an eye to the uveoscleral outflow pathway to reduce intraocular pressure. In some embodiments, an instrument is provided for delivering and/or implanting the drainage shunt ab interno in an eye to divert aqueous humor from the anterior chamber to the uveoscleral outflow pathway. In some embodiments, a method is provided for implanting a drainage shunt ab interno in an eye to divert aqueous humor from the anterior chamber to the uveoscleral outflow pathway. In some embodiments, the aqueous humor is diverted to the supraciliary space or the suprachoroidal space of the uveoscleral outflow pathway.

[0079] The term “shunt” as used herein is a broad term, and is to be given its ordinary and customary meaning to a person of ordinary skill in the art (and it is not to be limited to a special or customized meaning), and refers without limitation to an implant defining one or more fluid passages. The fluid passage(s) in some embodiments remains patent and, in other embodiments, the passage(s) is fully or partially occluded under at least some circumstances (e.g., at lower intraocular pressure levels). The shunts may feature a variety of characteristics, described in more detail below, which facilitate the regulation of intraocular pressure. The mechanical aspects and material composition of the shunt can be important for controlling the amount and direction of fluid flow. Therefore, various examples of shunt dimensions, features, tip configurations, material flexibility, coatings, and valve design, in accordance with some embodiments of the present disclosure, are discussed in detail below.

[0080] The delivery instruments, described in more detail below, may be used to facilitate delivery and/or implantation of the shunt to the desired location of the eye. The delivery instrument preferably is used to place the shunt into a desired position by application of a continual implantation force, by tapping the shunt into place using a distal portion of the delivery instrument, or by a combination of these methods. The design of the delivery instruments may take into account, for example, the angle of implantation and the location of the shunt relative to an incision. For example, in some embodiments, the delivery instrument may have a fixed geometry, be shape-set, or actuated. In some embodiments, the delivery

instrument may have adjunctive or ancillary functions. In some embodiments, the delivery instrument may additionally be used to, for example, inject dye and/or viscoelastic fluid, to dissect, or be used as a guidewire.

[0081] The shunt can be advanced through the ciliary attachment tissue, which lies to the posterior of the scleral spur, during implantation. This tissue typically is fibrous or porous, which is relatively easy to pierce or cut with a surgical device, and lies inward of the scleral spur. The shunt can be advanced through this tissue and abut against the sclera once the shunt extends into the uveoscleral outflow pathway. The shunt can then slide within the uveoscleral outflow pathway along the interior wall of the sclera. As the shunt is advanced into the uveoscleral outflow pathway and against the sclera, the shunt will likely be oriented at an angle with respect to the interior wall of the sclera. The shunt is advanced until it reaches the desired implantation site within the uveoscleral outflow pathway. In some embodiments, the shunt is advanced into the ciliary body or ciliary muscle bundles to achieve drainage into the supraciliary space. In other embodiments, the shunt is advanced through the ciliary body or ciliary muscle bundles to achieve fluid communication between the anterior chamber and the suprachoroidal space. In still other embodiments, the shunt is advanced into the compact zone or through the compact to drain aqueous humor into the more distal portions of the suprachoroidal space.

Shunts

[0082] The disclosed embodiments include shunts that provide a fluid flow path for conducting aqueous humor from the anterior chamber of an eye to the uveoscleral outflow pathway to reduce intraocular pressure, preferably below episcleral venous pressure without hypotony. The shunts can have an inflow portion and an outflow portion. The outflow portion of the shunt preferably is disposed at or near a distal end of the shunt. When the shunt is implanted, the inflow portion may be sized and configured to reside in the anterior chamber of the eye and the outflow portion may be sized and configured to reside in the uveoscleral outflow pathway. In some embodiments, the outflow portion may be sized and configured to reside in the supraciliary region of the uveoscleral outflow pathway or in the suprachoroidal space.

[0083] One or more lumens can extend through the shunt to form at least a portion of the flow path. Preferably, there is at least one lumen that operates to conduct the fluid through the shunt. Each lumen preferably extends from an inflow end to an outflow end along a lumen axis. In some embodiments the lumen extends substantially through the longitudinal center of the shunt. In other embodiments, the lumen can be offset from the longitudinal center of the shunt. In still other embodiments, the flow path can be defined by grooves, channel or reliefs formed on an outer surface of the shunt body.

[0084] One or more openings can extend through the wall of the shunt. In some embodiments, the openings can extend through a middle portion of the shunt. In other embodiments the openings can extend through other portions of the shunt. The openings can be one or more of a variety of functions. One such function is that when the shunt is inserted into the suprachoroidal or supraciliary space, the openings provide a plurality of routes through which the aqueous humor can drain. For example, once the shunt is inserted into the eye, if the shunt only has one outflow channel (e.g., one end of a lumen), that outflow channel can be plugged, for example, by the shunt's abutment against the interior surface of the sclera or the outer surface of the choroid. Additionally, the outflow channel can be clogged with tissue that is accumulated or cored during the advancement of the shunt through the fibrous or porous tissue. A plurality of openings provides a plurality of routes through which the fluid may flow to maintain patency and operability of the drainage shunt. In embodiments where the shunt has a porous body, the openings can define surface discontinuities to assist in anchoring the shunt once implanted.

[0085] The shunt in some embodiments can include a distal portion that is sufficiently sharp to pierce eye tissue near the scleral spur of the eye, and that is disposed closer to the outlet portion than to the inlet portion. In some embodiments, the distal portion is located at the distal end of the implant. The distal portion can be sufficiently blunt so as not to substantially penetrate scleral tissue of the eye. In some embodiments, the shunts have a generally sharpened forward end and are self-trephinating, i.e., self-penetrating, so as to pass through tissue without pre-forming an incision, hole or aperture. The sharpened forward end can be, for example, conical or tapered. The tip can be sufficiently sharp to pierce eye tissue near the scleral spur of the eye. The tip also can be sufficiently blunt so as not to

substantially penetrate scleral tissue of the eye. The taper angle of the sharpened end can be, for example, about $30^{\circ} \pm 15^{\circ}$ in some embodiments. The radius of the tip can be about 70 to about 200 microns. In other embodiments, where an outlet opening is formed at the distal end of the shunt, the distal portion gradually increases in cross-sectional size in the proximal direction, preferably at a generally constant taper or radius or in a parabolic manner.

[0086] The body of the shunt can include at least one surface irregularity. The surface irregularity can comprise, for example, a ridge, groove, relief, hole, or annular groove. The surface discontinuities or irregularities can also be formed by barbs or other projections, which extend from the outer surface of the shunt, to inhibit migration of the shunt from its implanted position. In some embodiments, the projections may comprise external ribbing to resist displacement of the shunt. The surface irregularity in some embodiments can interact with the tissue of the interior wall of the sclera and/or with the tissue of the ciliary attachment tissue. In some embodiments, the shunts are anchored by mechanical interlock between tissue and an irregular surface and/or by friction fit. In other embodiments, the shunt includes cylindrical recessed portions (e.g., annular groves) along an elongate body to provide enhanced gripping features during implantation and anchoring following implantation within the eye tissue.

[0087] The shunt may also incorporate fixation features, such as flexible radial (i.e., outwardly extending) extensions. The extensions may be separate pieces attached to the shunt, or may be formed by slitting the shunt wall, and thermally forming or mechanically deforming the extensions radially outward. If the extensions are separate pieces, they may be comprised of flexible material such as nitinol or polyimide. The extensions may be located at the proximal or distal ends of the shunt, or both, to prevent extrusion of the shunt from its intended location. The flexibility of the fixation features will facilitate entry through the corneal incision, and also through the ciliary muscle attachment tissue.

[0088] In some embodiments, the body of the shunt has an outlet opening on a side surface to allow fluid flow. In some embodiments, the body of the shunt has a plurality of outlet openings on a side surface to allow fluid flow. In other embodiments, there is a plurality of outlet openings at one end of the shunt, such as the distal end. The openings can facilitate fluid flow through the shunt.

[0089] The shunt may have a cap, or tip, at one end. The cap can include a tissue-piercing end and one or more outlet openings. Each of the one or more outlet openings can communicate with at least one of the one or more lumens. In some embodiments the cap can have a conically shaped tip with a plurality of outlet openings disposed proximal of the tip's distal end. In other embodiments, the cap can have a tapered angle tip. The tip can be sufficiently sharp to pierce eye tissue near the scleral spur of the eye. The tip also can be sufficiently blunt so as not to substantially penetrate scleral tissue of the eye. In some embodiments, the conically shaped tip facilitates delivery of the shunt to the desired location. In some embodiments, the cap has an outlet opening on a side surface to allow fluid flow. In some embodiments, the cap has a plurality of outlet openings on a side surface to allow fluid flow. In other embodiments, there is a plurality of outlet openings on the conical surface of the cap. The openings on the cap can facilitate fluid flow through the shunt. The opening may provide an alternate route for fluid flow which is beneficial in case the primary outflow portion of the shunt becomes blocked.

[0090] In some embodiments, multiple shunts are configured to be delivered during a single procedure. In some embodiments when multiple shunts are delivered, the shunts are arranged tandemly. The shunt can include a tip protector at one end. The tip protector can comprise a recess shaped to receive and protect, for example, the tip of an adjacent shunt. In some embodiments, the tip of the adjacent shunt has a conical shape. The recess may be shaped to contact the sides of the conical tip while protecting the more tapered tip, or end, from impact. The tip protector is particularly useful for delivery of multiple shunts.

[0091] The shunts may be of varied lengths to optimize flows. In some preferred embodiments, the shunt has sufficient length such that the outflow portion resides in the suprachoroidal space and the inflow portion is exposed to the anterior chamber. In other preferred embodiments, the length of the shunt is a length such that the outflow portion resides in the supraciliary space of the uveoscleral outflow pathway. In some embodiments, the length of the shunt is a length such that the outflow portion resides in the membranous region of the uveoscleral outflow pathway adjacent to the retina, while in other embodiments, the shunt has a length that extends distally past the membranous region. In some

embodiments, the length of the shunt from the portion residing in the anterior chamber to the portion residing in the uveoscleral outflow pathway may be about 0.5 mm to about 5 mm. In preferred embodiments, the length of the shunt may be about 1.5 mm to about 5 mm. In more preferred embodiments, the length of the shunt may be about 2.0 mm. In some embodiments, the length of the shunt is about 0.5, 0.6, 0.7, 0.8, 0.9, 1.0, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 2.0, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 3.0, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 4.0, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, or 5.0 mm.

[0092] The shunt can have an outer diameter that will permit the shunt to fit within a 23-gauge needle during implantation. The shunt can also have a diameter that is designed to be inserted with larger needles. For example, the shunt can also be delivered with 18-, 19- or 20-gauge needles. In other embodiments, smaller gauge applicators, such as a 23-gauge (or smaller) applicator, may be used. The shunt can have a substantially constant cross-sectional shape through most of the length of the shunt, or the shunt can have portions of reduced or enlarged cross-sectional size (e.g., diameter), or cylindrical channels, e.g., annular grooves, disposed on the outer surface between the proximal end and the distal end. The distal end of the shunt can have a tapered portion, or a portion having a continually decreasing radial dimension with respect to the lumen axis along the length of the axis. The tapered portion preferably in some embodiments terminates with a smaller radial dimension at the outflow end. During implantation, the tapered portion can operate to form, dilate, and/or increase the size of, an incision or puncture created in the tissue. The tapered portion may have a diameter of about 23 gauge to about 30 gauge, and preferably about 25 gauge.

[0093] The diameter of one or more drainage lumens within the shunt may be varied to alter flow characteristics. The cross-sectional size of a shunt may be, for example, 0.1 mm to about 1.0 mm, or preferably about 0.3 mm to about 0.4 mm. A small cross-sectional size can be used to restrict flow. The cross-sectional shape of the shunt or a shunt may be any of a variety of cross-sectional shapes suitable for allowing fluid flow. For example, the cross-sectional shape of the shunt or shunt may be circular, oval, square, trapezoidal, rectangular, or any combination thereof.

[0094] In some embodiments, the shunt is configured to expand, either radially or axially, or both radially and axially. In some embodiments, the shunt may be self-expanding. In other embodiments, the shunt may be expanded by, for example, using a balloon device.

[0095] The structure of the shunt may be flexible. At least a portion of the structure of the shunt may be flexible, or the whole structure may be flexible. In some embodiments, the structure of the shunt is accordion- or balloon-like. This pleated like structure provides flexibility. In other embodiments, at least a portion of the shunt is curved. In some embodiments, at least a portion of the shunt is straight. In some embodiments, the shunt has both curved and straight portions, and in some embodiments, the shunt is generally rigid (i.e., maintains its preformed shape when implanted).

[0096] The shunt is preferably made of one or more biocompatible materials. Suitable biocompatible materials include polypropylene, polyimide, glass, nitinol, polyvinyl alcohol, polyvinyl pyrrolidone, collagen, chemically-treated collagen, polyethersulfone (PES), poly(styrene-isobutyl-styrene), Pebax, acrylic, polyolefin, polysilicon, polypropylene, hydroxyapatite, titanium, gold, silver, platinum, other metals, ceramics, plastics and a mixture thereof. The shunts can be manufactured by conventional sintering, micro machining, laser machining, and/or electrical discharge machining.

[0097] In some embodiments, the shunt is made of a flexible material. In other embodiments, the shunt is made of a rigid material. In some embodiments, a portion of the shunt is made from flexible material while another portion of the shunt is made from rigid material. The body can have an outer surface of which at least a portion is porous. Some embodiments include porosity that can be varied by masking a portion of the exterior with a band. Where the shunts include a porous body, the cross-section and porosity can be calibrated (down to 0.5 micrometers) to control the flow rates of aqueous humor through the shunt.

[0098] In some embodiments, at least a portion of the shunt (e.g., an internal spine or an anchor) is made of a material capable of shape memory. A material capable of shape memory may be compressed and, upon release, may expand axially or radially, or both axially and radially, to assume a particular shape. In some embodiments, at least a portion of the shunt has a preformed shape. In other embodiments, at least a portion of the shunt is

made of a superelastic material. In some embodiments, at least a portion of the shunt is made up of nitinol. In other embodiments, at least a portion of the shunt is made of a deformable material.

[0099] The body of the shunt can comprise material that includes a therapeutic agent, and/or can house, anchor, or support a therapeutic agent, or can include a coating. The coating can include a therapeutic agent. The coatings can be, for example, a drug eluting coating, an antithrombogenic coating, and a lubricious coating. The therapeutic agent can be selected from the group consisting of: heparin, TGF-beta, an intraocular pressure-lowering drug, and an anti-proliferative agent. Materials that may be used for a drug-eluting coating include parylene C, poly (butyl methacrylate), poly (methyl methacrylate), polyethylene-co-vinyl acetate, and other materials known in the art.

[0100] The shunt can further comprise a biodegradable material in or on the shunt. The biodegradable material can be selected from the group consisting of poly(lactic acid), polyethylene-vinyl acetate, poly(lactic-co-glycolic acid), poly(D,L-lactide), poly(D,L-lactide-co-trimethylene carbonate), collagen, heparinized collagen, poly(caprolactone), poly(glycolic acid), and a copolymer. All or a portion of the shunt may be coated with a therapeutic agent, e.g. with heparin, preferably in the flow path, to reduce blood thrombosis or tissue restenosis.

[0101] The flow path through the shunt can be configured to be regulated to a flow rate that will reduce the likelihood of hypotony in the eye. In some embodiments, the intraocular pressure is maintained at about 8mm Hg. In other embodiments, the intraocular pressure is maintained at pressures less than about 8mmHg, for example the intraocular pressure may be maintained between about 6mm Hg and about 8mm Hg. In other embodiments, the intraocular pressure is maintained at pressures greater than about 8mm Hg. For example, the pressures may be maintained between about 8mmHg and about 18mm Hg, and more preferably between 8mm Hg and 16mm Hg, , and most preferably not greater than 12 mm Hg. In some embodiments, the flow rate can be limited to about 2.5 $\mu\text{L}/\text{min}$ or less. In some embodiments the flow rate can be limited to between about 1.9 $\mu\text{L}/\text{min}$ and about 3.1 $\mu\text{L}/\text{min}$.

[0102] For example, the Hagen-Poiseuille equation suggests that a 4mm long stent at a flow rate of 2.5 $\mu\text{L}/\text{min}$ should have an inner diameter of 52 mm to create a pressure gradient of 5mm Hg above the pressure in the suprachoroidal space.

[0103] The shunt may or may not comprise means for regulating fluid flow through the shunt. Means for regulating fluid flow can include flow restrictors, pressure regulators, or both. Alternatively, in some embodiments the shunt has neither a flow restrictor nor a pressure regulator. Regulating flow of aqueous humor can comprise varying between at least first and second operational states in which aqueous humor flow is more restricted in a first state and less restricted in a second state. Increasing the restriction to flow when changing from the second state to the first state can involve moving a valve toward a valve seat in a direction generally parallel or generally normal to a line connecting the proximal and distal ends of the shunt.

[0104] As noted above, the outflow portion of the shunt, in some embodiments is sized and configured to reside in the supraciliary region of the uveoscleral outflow pathway. In such embodiments, there is a lesser need for means for regulating fluid flow through the shunt.

[0105] The means for flow restriction may be, for example, a valve, a long lumen length, small lumen cross section, or any combination thereof. In some embodiments, the flow of fluid is restricted by the size of a lumen within the shunt, which produces a capillary effect that limits the fluid flow for given pressures. The capillary effect of the lumen allows the shunt to restrict flow and provides a valveless regulation of fluid flow.

[0106] The flow path length may be increased without increasing the overall length of the shunt by creating a lumen with a spiral flow path. A lumen within the shunt is configured to accommodate placement therein of a spiral flow channel core that is configured to provide preferred flow restriction. In effect, the spiral flow channel provides an extended path for the flow of fluid between the inlet(s) and outlet(s) of the shunt that is greater than a straight lumen extending between the ends of the shunt. The extended path provides a greater potential resistance of fluid flow through the shunt without increasing the length of the shunt. The core could have a single spiral flow channel, or a plurality of spiral flow

channels for providing a plurality of flow paths through which fluid may flow through the shunt. For example, the core can have two or more spiral flow channels, which can intersect.

[0107] In some embodiments, the means for flow regulation comprises a pressure regulating valve. The valve can open when fluid pressure within the anterior chamber exceeds a preset level. Intraocular pressure may be used to apply a force to move a valve surface within the shunt in a direction transverse to a longitudinal axis of the shunt such that aqueous humor flows from the anterior chamber to the uveoscleral outflow pathway at intraocular pressures greater than a threshold pressure.

[0108] A shunt may have any number of valves to restrict flow and/or regulate pressure. The valve is preferably located between the anterior chamber and one or more effluent openings such that movement of the valve regulates flow from the interior chamber to the one or more effluent openings. A variety of valves are useful with the shunt for restricting flow. In some embodiments, the valve is a unidirectional valve and/or is a pressure relief valve. The pressure relief valve can comprise a ball, a ball seat and a biasing member urging the ball towards the ball seat. In some embodiments, the valve is a reed-type valve. In a reed valve, for example, one end of the valve may be fixed to a portion of the shunt. The body of the reed valve is capable of being deflected in order to allow flow. Pressure from fluid in the anterior chamber can deflect the body of the reed valve, thereby causing the valve to open.

[0109] In some embodiments, the shunt includes a pressure regulation valve having a deflectable plate or diaphragm with a surface area exposed to fluid within the interior chamber, the surface area being substantially greater than the total cross-sectional flow area of the one or more influent openings of the shunt. Such a valve can be disposed between an interior chamber of the shunt and the one or more effluent openings such that movement of the deflectable plate regulates flow from the interior chamber to the one or more effluent openings. The plate can extend in a direction generally parallel to the inlet flow path and to the outlet flow path.

[0110] When the intraocular pressure exceeds a particular pressure, the check pressure relief valve will open and permit fluid to flow between the anterior chamber and the uveoscleral outflow pathway. When the intraocular pressure reaches a second, lower

pressure, the valve will close and limit or inhibit fluid from being conducted to the suprachoroidal space. The valve will remain closed until the intraocular pressure again reaches the particular pressure, and at which time the valve will reopen to permit or enhance drainage of fluid to the uveoscleral outflow pathway. Accordingly, the shunt provides drainage of the anterior chamber through the shunt based on the intraocular pressure levels and reduces the likelihood for over-draining the anterior chamber and causing hypotony.

Delivery Instruments

[0111] Another aspect of the systems and methods described herein relates to delivery instruments for implanting a shunt for draining fluid from the anterior chamber into a physiologic outflow space. In some embodiments, the shunt is inserted from a site transocularly situated from the implantation site. The delivery instrument can be sufficiently long to advance the shunt transocularly from the insertion site across the anterior chamber to the implantation site. At least a portion of the instrument can be flexible. Alternatively, the instrument can be rigid. The instrument can comprise a plurality of members longitudinally moveable relative to each other. In some embodiments, at least a portion of the delivery instrument is curved or angled. In some embodiments, a portion of the delivery instrument is rigid and another portion of the instrument is flexible.

[0112] In some embodiments, the delivery instrument has a distal curvature. The distal curvature of the delivery instrument may be characterized as a radius of approximately 10 to 30 mm, and preferably about 20 mm.

[0113] In some embodiments, the delivery instrument has a distal angle. The distal angle may be characterized as approximately 90 to 170 degrees relative to an axis of the proximal segment of the delivery instrument, and preferably about 145 degrees. The angle can incorporate a small radius of curvature at the “elbow” so as to make a smooth transition from the proximal segment of the delivery instrument to the distal segment. The length of the distal segment may be approximately 0.5 to 7 mm, and preferably about 2 to 3 mm.

[0114] In some embodiments, the instruments have a sharpened forward end and are self-trephinating, i.e., self-penetrating, so as to pass through tissue without pre-forming an

incision, hole or aperture. Alternatively, a trocar, scalpel, or similar instrument can be used to pre-form an incision in the eye tissue before passing the shunt into such tissue.

[0115] For delivery of some embodiments of the ocular shunt, the instrument can have a sufficiently small cross section such that the insertion site self seals without suturing upon withdrawal of the instrument from the eye. An outer diameter of the delivery instrument preferably is no greater than about 18 gauge and is not smaller than about 27 gauge.

[0116] For delivery of some embodiments of the ocular shunt, the incision in the corneal tissue is preferable made with a hollow needle through which the shunt is passed. The needle has a small diameter size (e.g., 18 or 19 or 20 or 21 or 22 or 23 or 24 or 25 or 26 or 27 gauge) so that the incision is self sealing and the implantation occurs in a closed chamber with or without viscoelastic. A self-sealing incision also can be formed using a conventional “tunneling” procedure in which a spatula-shaped scalpel is used to create a generally inverted V-shaped incision through the cornea. In a preferred mode, the instrument used to form the incision through the cornea remains in place (that is, extends through the corneal incision) during the procedure and is not removed until after implantation. Such incision-forming instrument either can be used to carry the ocular shunt or can cooperate with a delivery instrument to allow implantation through the same incision without withdrawing the incision-forming instrument. Of course, in other modes, various surgical instruments can be passed through one or more corneal incisions multiple times.

[0117] Once into the anterior chamber, a delivery instrument can be advanced from the insertion site transocularly into the anterior chamber angle and positioned at a location near the scleral spur. Using the scleral spur as a reference point, the delivery instrument can be advanced further in a generally posterior direction to drive the shunt into eye tissue at a location just inward of the scleral spur toward the iris. The placement and implantation of the shunt can be performed using a gonioscope or other conventional imaging equipment. The delivery instrument preferably is used to force the shunt into a desired position by application of a continual implantation force, by tapping the shunt into place using a distal portion of the delivery instrument, or by a combination of these methods. Once

the shunt is in the desired position, it may be further seated by tapping using a distal portion of the delivery instrument.

[0118] The delivery instrument can include an open distal end with a lumen extending therethrough. Positioned within the lumen is preferably a pusher tube that is axially movable within the lumen. The pusher tube can be any device suitable for pushing or manipulating the shunt in relation to the delivery instrument, such as, for example, but without limitation a screw, a rod, a stored energy device such as a spring. A wall of the delivery instrument preferably extends beyond pusher tube to accommodate placement within the lumen of a shunt. The shunt can be secured in position. For example, the shunt can be secured by viscoelastic or mechanical interlock with the pusher tube or wall. When the shunt is brought into position adjacent the tissue in the anterior chamber angle, the pusher tube is advanced axially toward the open distal end of the delivery instrument. As the pusher tube is advanced, the shunt is also advanced. When the shunt is advanced through the tissue and such that it is no longer in the lumen of the delivery instrument, the delivery instrument is retracted, leaving the shunt in the eye tissue.

[0119] Some embodiments can include a spring-loaded or stored-energy pusher system. The spring-loaded pusher preferably includes a button operably connected to a hinged rod device. The rod of the hinged rod device engages a depression in the surface of the pusher, keeping the spring of the pusher in a compressed conformation. When the user pushes the button, the rod is disengaged from the depression, thereby allowing the spring to decompress, thereby advancing the pusher forward.

[0120] In some embodiments, an over-the wire system is used to deliver the shunt. The shunt can be delivered over a wire. Preferably, the wire is self-trephinating. The wire can function as a trocar. The wire can be superelastic, flexible, or relatively inflexible with respect to the shunt. The wire can be pre-formed to have a certain shape. The wire can be curved. The wire can have shape memory, or be elastic. In some embodiments, the wire is a pull wire. The wire can be a steerable catheter.

[0121] In some embodiments, the wire is positioned within a lumen in the shunt. The wire can be axially movable within the lumen. The lumen may or may not include valves or other flow regulatory devices.

[0122] In some embodiments, the delivery instrument comprises a trocar. The trocar may be angled or curved. The trocar can be rigid, semi-rigid or flexible. In embodiments where the trocar is stiff, the shunt can be, but need not be relatively flexible. The diameter of the trocar can be about 0.001 inches to about 0.01 inches. In some embodiments, the diameter of the trocar is 0.001, 0.002, 0.004, 0.005, 0.006, 0.007, 0.008, 0.009, or 0.01 inches.

[0123] In some embodiments, delivery of the shunt is achieved by applying a driving force at or near the distal end of the shunt. The driving force can be a pulling or a pushing applied generally to the end of the shunt.

[0124] The instrument can include a seal to prevent aqueous humor from passing through the delivery instrument and/or between the members of the instrument when the instrument is in the eye. The seal can also aid in preventing backflow of aqueous humor through the instrument and out the eye. Suitable seals for inhibiting leakage include, for example, an o-ring, a coating, a hydrophilic agent, a hydrophobic agent, and combinations thereof. The coating can be, for example, a silicone coat such as MDX™ silicone fluid. In some embodiments, the instrument is coated with the coating and a hydrophilic or hydrophobic agent. In some embodiments, one region of the instrument is coated with the coating plus the hydrophilic agent, and another region of the instrument is coated with the coating plus the hydrophobic agent. The delivery instrument can additionally comprise a seal between various members comprising the instrument. The seal can comprise a hydrophobic or hydrophilic coating between slip-fit surfaces of the members of the instrument. The seal can be disposed proximate of the drainage shunt when carried by the delivery instrument. Preferably, the seal is present on at least a section of each of two devices that are machined to fit closely with one another.

[0125] In some embodiments, the delivery instrument can include a distal end having a beveled shape. The delivery instrument can include a distal end having a spatula shape. The beveled or spatula shape can have a sharpened edge. The beveled or spatula shape can include a recess to contain the shunt. The recess can include a pusher or other suitable means to push out or eject the shunt.

[0126] The delivery instrument further can be configured to deliver multiple shunts. In some embodiments, when multiple shunts are delivered, the shunts can be arranged in tandem, as described in greater detail below.

Procedures

[0127] For delivery of some embodiments of the ocular shunt, the implantation occurs in a closed chamber with or without viscoelastic.

[0128] The shunts may be placed using an applicator, such as a pusher, or they may be placed using a delivery instrument having energy stored in the instrument, such as disclosed in U.S. Patent Publication 2004/0050392, filed August 28, 2002, the entirety of which is incorporated herein by reference and made a part of this specification and disclosure. In some embodiments, fluid may be infused through the delivery instrument or another instrument used in the procedure to create an elevated fluid pressure at the distal end of the shunt to ease implantation.

[0129] In some embodiments, the shunt is implanted through the fibrous attachment of the ciliary muscle to the sclera. This fibrous attachment zone extends about 0.5 mm posteriorly from the scleral spur, as shown between the two arrows (1020) in Figure 17.

[0130] In some embodiments it is desirable to deliver the shunt ab interno across the eye, through a small incision at or near the limbus (Figure 1). The overall geometry of the system makes it advantageous that the delivery instrument incorporates a distal curvature, or a distal angle. In the former case, the shunt can be flexible to facilitate delivery along the curvature or can be more loosely held to move easily along an accurate path. In the latter case, the shunt can be relatively rigid. The delivery instrument can incorporate a shunt advancement element (e.g. pusher) that is flexible enough to pass through the distal angle.

[0131] In some embodiments, during clinical use, the shunt and delivery instrument can be advanced together through the anterior chamber 32 from an incision at or near the limbus, across the iris, and through the ciliary muscle attachment until the shunt outlet portion is located in the uveoscleral outflow pathway (e.g. exposed to the suprachoroidal space 34 defined between the sclera 38 and the choroid 40). Figure 2 illustrates a transocular implantation approach with the delivery instrument inserted well

above the limbus. The incision, however, can be more posterior and closer to the limbus. In other embodiments, the operator can then simultaneously push on a pusher device while pulling back on the delivery instrument, such that the shunt outlet portion maintains its location in the uveoscleral outflow pathway. The shunt is released from the delivery instrument, and the delivery instrument is retracted proximally, as illustrated in Figure 3. The delivery instrument then can be withdrawn from the anterior chamber through the incision.

[0132] In some embodiments, a viscoelastic can be injected into the suprachoroidal space to create a chamber or pocket between the choroid and sclera which can be accessed by a shunt. Such a pocket could expose more of the choroidal and scleral tissue area, and increase uveoscleral outflow, causing a lower IOP. In some embodiments, the viscoelastic material can be injected with a 25 or 27G cannula, for example, through an incision in the ciliary muscle attachment or through the sclera (e.g. from outside the eye). The viscoelastic material can also be injected through the shunt itself either before, during or after implantation is completed.

[0133] In some embodiments, a hyperosmotic agent can be injected into the suprachoroidal space. Such an injection can delay IOP reduction. Thus, hypotony can be avoided in the acute postoperative period by temporarily reducing choroidal absorption. The hyperosmotic agent can be, for example glucose, albumin, HYPaque™ medium, glycerol, or poly(ethylene glycol). The hyperosmotic agent can breakdown or wash out as the patient heals, resulting in a stable, acceptably low IOP, and avoiding transient hypotony.

Therapeutic agents

[0134] The therapeutic agents that may be utilized with the ophthalmic implant system may include one or more agents provided below. The therapeutic agents include but are not limited to pharmaceutical agents, biological agents including hormones, enzyme or antibody-related components, oligonucleotides, DNA/RNA vectors and live cells configured to produce one or more biological components. The use of any particular therapeutic agent is not limited to their primary effect or regulatory body-approved treatment indication or manner of use. The listing of any particular agent within any one therapeutic class below is only representative of one possible use of the agent and is not intended to limit the scope of its use with the ophthalmic implant system. Exemplary therapeutic agents may include: anti-

angiogenesis agents, including VEGF receptor tyrosine kinase inhibitors and anti-vascular endothelial growth factor (anti-VEGF) agents such as ranibizumab (LUCENTIS®) and bevacizumab (AVASTIN®), pegaptanib (MACUGEN®), sunitinib and sorafenib and any of a variety of known small-molecule and transcription inhibitors having anti-angiogenesis effect; classes of known ophthalmic agents, including: glaucoma agents, such as beta-blocker agents such as betaxolol, carteolol, levobetaxolol, levobunolol and timolol; carbonic anhydrase inhibitor agents such as acetazolamide, brinzolamide, dorzolamide and methazolamide; mydriatic-cycloplegic agents such as atropine, cyclopentolate, succinylcholine, homatropine, phenylephrine, scopolamine and tropicamide; prostaglandin analog agents such as bimatoprost, latanoprost, travoprost and unoprostone; sympathomimetic agents such as aproclonidine, brimonidine and dipivefrin; corticosteroidal and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents such as beclomethasone, budesonide, dexamethasone, diclofenac, flunisolide, fluorometholone, fluticasone, ketorolac, hydrocortisone, loteprednol, prednisolone, rimexolone and triamcinolone; anti-infective agents such as aminoglycosides such as gentamicin and tobramycin; fluoroquinolones such as ciprofloxacin, gatifloxacin, levofloxacin, moxifloxacin, norfloxacin, ofloxacin; bacitracin, erythromycin, fusidic acid, neomycin, polymyxin B, gramicidin, trimethoprim and sulfacetamide; anti-histamine agents such as azelastine, emedastine and levocabastine; MAST cells stabilizer agents such as cromolyn sodium, ketotifen, lodoxamide, nedocrimil, olopatadine and pemirolast; ciliary body ablative agents, such as the aforementioned gentamicin and cidofovir; and other ophthalmic agents such as verteporfin, proparacaine, tetracaine, cyclosporine and pilocarpine.

[0135] Other therapeutic agents of the same class as the ophthalmic agents listed above that may be used include: other beta-blocker agents such as acebutolol, atenolol, bisoprolol, carvedilol, asmolol, labetalol, nadolol, penbutolol, pindolol and propranolol; other corticosteroidal and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents such as aspirin, betamethasone, cortisone, diflunisal, etodolac, fenoprofen, fludrocortisone, flurbiprofen, hydrocortisone, ibuprofen, indomethacin, ketoprofen, meclofenamate, mefenamic acid, meloxicam, methylprednisolone, nabumetone, naproxen, oxaprozin, prednisolone, piroxicam, salsalate, sulindac and tolmetin; COX-2 inhibitors like celecoxib, rofecoxib and Valdecoxib; other immune-modulating agents such as aldesleukin, adalimumab (HUMIRA®), azathioprine,

basiliximab, daclizumab, etanercept (ENBREL®), hydroxychloroquine, infliximab (REMICADE®), leflunomide, methotrexate, mycophenolate mofetil, and sulfasalazine; other anti-histamine agents such as loratadine, desloratadine, cetirizine, diphenhydramine, chlorpheniramine, dexchlorpheniramine, clemastine, cyproheptadine, fexofenadine, hydroxyzine and promethazine; other anti-infective agents such as aminoglycosides such as amikacin and streptomycin; anti-fungal agents such as amphotericin B, caspofungin, clotrimazole, fluconazole, itraconazole, ketoconazole, voriconazole, terbinafine and nystatin; anti-malarial agents such as chloroquine, atovaquone, mefloquine, primaquine, quinidine and quinine; anti-mycobacterium agents such as ethambutol, isoniazid, pyrazinamide, rifampin and rifabutin; anti-parasitic agents such as albendazole, mebendazole, thiobendazole, metronidazole, pyrantel, atovaquone, iodoquinaol, ivermectin, paromycin, praziquantel, and trimetrexate; other anti-viral agents, including anti-CMV or anti-herpetic agents such as acyclovir, cidofovir, famciclovir, ganciclovir, valacyclovir, valganciclovir, vidarabine, trifluridine and foscarnet; protease inhibitors such as ritonavir, saquinavir, lopinavir, indinavir, atazanavir, amprenavir and nelfinavir; nucleotide/nucleoside/non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors such as abacavir, ddI, 3TC, d4T, ddC, tenofovir and emtricitabine, delavirdine, efavirenz and nevirapine; other anti-viral agents such as interferons, ribavirin and trifluridine; other anti-bacterial agents, including cabapenems like ertapenem, imipenem and meropenem; cephalosporins such as cefadroxil, cefazolin, cefdinir, cefditoren, cephalexin, cefaclor, cefepime, cefoperazone, cefotaxime, cefotetan, cefoxitin, cefpodoxime, cefprozil, ceftaxidime, ceftibuten, ceftizoxime, ceftriaxone, cefuroxime and loracarbef; other macrolides and ketolides such as azithromycin, clarithromycin, dirithromycin and telithromycin; penicillins (with and without clavulanate) including amoxicillin, ampicillin, pivampicillin, dicloxacillin, nafcillin, oxacillin, piperacillin, and ticarcillin; tetracyclines such as doxycycline, minocycline and tetracycline; other anti-bacterials such as aztreonam, chloramphenicol, clindamycin, linezolid, nitrofurantoin and vancomycin; alpha blocker agents such as doxazosin, prazosin and terazosin; calcium-channel blockers such as amlodipine, bepridil, diltiazem, felodipine, isradipine, nicardipine, nifedipine, nisoldipine and verapamil; other anti-hypertensive agents such as clonidine, diazoxide, fenoldopam, hydralazine, minoxidil, nitroprusside, phenoxybenzamine,

epoprostenol, tolazoline, treprostinil and nitrate-based agents; anti-coagulant agents, including heparins and heparinoids such as heparin, dalteparin, enoxaparin, tinzaparin and fondaparinux; other anti-coagulant agents such as hirudin, aprotinin, argatroban, bivalirudin, desirudin, lepirudin, warfarin and ximelagatran; anti-platelet agents such as abciximab, clopidogrel, dipyridamole, optifibatide, ticlopidine and tirofiban; prostaglandin PDE-5 inhibitors and other prostaglandin agents such as alprostadil, carboprost, sildenafil, tadalafil and vardenafil; thrombolytic agents such as alteplase, anistreplase, reteplase, streptokinase, tenecteplase and urokinase; anti-proliferative agents such as sirolimus, tacrolimus, everolimus, zotarolimus, paclitaxel and mycophenolic acid; hormonal-related agents including levothyroxine, fluoxymestrone, methyltestosterone, nandrolone, oxandrolone, testosterone, estradiol, estrone, estropipate, clomiphene, gonadotropins, hydroxyprogesterone, levonorgestrel, medroxyprogesterone, megestrol, mifepristone, norethindrone, oxytocin, progesterone, raloxifene and tamoxifen; anti-neoplastic agents, including alkylating agents such as lomustine, melphalan and procarbazine antibiotic-like agents such as bleomycin, daunorubicin, doxorubicin, idarubicin, mitomycin and plicamycin; antimetabolite agents such as cytarabine, fludarabine, hydroxyurea, mercaptopurine and 5-fluorouracil (5-FU); immune modulating agents such as aldesleukin, imatinib, rituximab and tositumomab; mitotic inhibitors docetaxel, etoposide, vinblastine and vincristine; radioactive agents such as strontium-89; and other anti-neoplastic agents such as irinotecan, topotecan and mitotane.

[0136] The therapeutic agents may be released or eluted from the ophthalmic implant system, bound to a surface of the ophthalmic implant, and/or used in conjunction with the ophthalmic implant through injection, oral or eye drop delivery routes. The therapeutic agents may also be released from a separate drug eluting device that is implantable in the same or a different location in the eye or orbital cavity. The separate drug eluting device may be located in a physiologic outflow pathway or physiologic cavity of the eye or body, or may be implanted into an artificially formed site of the eye or body. A variety of controlled-release technologies that are known in the art may be used with the ophthalmic implant system, including non-degradable and biodegradable polymeric and non-polymeric release platforms.

[0137] Injection/infusion/implantation routes or sites include intravenous and intravitreal routes, choroidal, scleral, conjunctival, retinal, ciliary body, posterior chamber, anterior chamber (including the angle), trabecular meshwork, Schlemm's canal, suprachoroidal, and other sites along the uveoscleral pathway. The vascular routes or sites include but are not limited to the ophthalmic artery, the lacrimal artery, the short posterior ciliary arteries, the long posterior ciliary arteries, the anterior ciliary arteries, the central retinal arteries, the central retinal veins, and episcleral arteries and veins.

[0138] In some embodiments, combinations of agents having synergistic and/or complementary effects for a particular disease or set of related conditions or symptoms may be used. In one example, a disease-treating agent may be used in combination with a metabolism-altering agent affecting the cytochrome P450 system to affect the pharmacokinetics of the disease-treating agent. In another example, an anti-infective agent may be combined with an anti-inflammatory agent to treat inflammation resulting from the infection.

Embodiments illustrated in Figure 4

[0139] Figure 4 illustrates one embodiment of a shunt 130 that is operable to drain fluid from the anterior chamber to the uveoscleral outflow pathway (e.g., the suprachoroidal space). The shunt 130 has an inflow portion 132 and an outflow portion 134. When the shunt is implanted, the inflow portion 132 is sized and configured to reside in the anterior chamber of the eye and the outflow portion 134 is sized and configured to reside in the uveoscleral outflow pathway. Extending through the shunt 130 is preferably at least one lumen 136 that operates to conduct the fluid through the shunt 130. Each lumen 136 preferably extends from an inflow end 138 to an outflow end 140 along a lumen axis 142.

[0140] The shunt 130 preferably has an outer diameter that will permit the shunt 130 to fit within a 21-gauge or 23-gauge needle or hollow instrument during implantation; however, larger or smaller gauge instruments may also be used. The shunt 130 can also have a diameter that is designed to be delivered with larger needles. For example, the shunt 130 can also be delivered with 18-, 19- or 20-gauge needles. The shunt 130 can have a constant diameter through most of the length of the shunt 130, or the shunt 130 can have portions of reduced diameter, e.g., annular grooves 146, between the proximal end 138 and the distal end

140. The annular grooves 146 produce an irregular outer surface that can operate to mechanically lock or anchor the shunt 130 in place when implanted. Of course, such surface discontinuities or irregularities can also be formed by barbs or other projections, which extend from the outer surface of the shunt, to inhibit migration of the shunt 130 from its implanted position, as described above.

[0141] The outflow portion 134 of the shunt 130 preferably is disposed at or near the distal end 140 of the shunt 130. In the illustrated embodiment, the outflow portion 134 has a tapered portion 144; however, it may also have other shapes (e.g. semi-sphere, a paraboloid, a hyperboloid) with a continually decreasing radial dimension with respect to the lumen axis 142 along the length of the axis 142. The tapered portion 144 preferably terminates with a smaller radial dimension at the outflow end 140. During implantation, the tapered portion 144 can operate to form, dilate, and/or increase the size of, an incision or puncture created in the tissue. For example, the distal end 140 can operate as a trocar to puncture or create an incision in the tissue. Following advancement of the distal end 140 of the shunt 130, the tapered portion 144 can be advanced through the puncture or incision. The tapered portion 144 will operate to stretch or expand the tissue around the puncture or incision to accommodate the increasing size of the tapered portion 144 as it is advanced through the tissue. When the stretched tissue passes over the cylindrical channels 146 having a reduced diameter, the stretched tissue will retract generally to fill the cylindrical channels 146 and will abut the edges of the shunt 130 having a greater diameter. The interaction of the tissue and the edges of the shunt 130 will provide an anchor for the shunt 130 following implantation to inhibit shunt migration.

[0142] The tapered portion 144 can also facilitate proper location of the shunt 130 into the supraciliary or suprachoroidal spaces. For example, the shunt 130 is preferably advanced through the tissue within the anterior chamber angle during implantation. This tissue typically is fibrous or porous, which is relatively easy to pierce or cut with a surgical device, such as the tip of the shunt 130. The shunt 130 can be advanced through this tissue and abut against the sclera once the shunt extends into the uveoscleral outflow pathway. As the shunt 130 abuts against the sclera, the tapered portion 144 preferably provides a generally rounded edge or surface that facilitates sliding of the shunt 130 within the suprachoroidal

space along the interior wall of the sclera. For example, as the shunt 130 is advanced into the uveoscleral outflow pathway and against the sclera, the shunt 130 will likely be oriented at an angle with respect to the interior wall of the sclera. As the tip of the shunt 130 engages the sclera, the tip preferably has a radius that will permit the shunt 130 to slide along the sclera instead of piercing or substantially penetrating the sclera. As the shunt 130 slides along the sclera, the tapered portion 144 will provide an edge against which the shunt 130 can abut against the sclera and reduce the likelihood that the shunt will pierce the sclera.

[0143] Once the shunt 130 is implanted in position with the inflow portion 132 residing in the anterior chamber and the outflow portion 134 residing in the uveoscleral outflow pathway, aqueous humor flows from the anterior chamber to the uveoscleral outflow pathway through the lumen 136 of the shunt. The flow of fluid is preferably restricted by the size of the lumen 136, which produces a capillary effect that limits the fluid flow for given pressures. The capillary effect of the lumen allows the shunt to restrict flow and provides a valveless regulation of fluid flow. The flow of fluid through the shunt 130 is preferably configured to be restricted to flow rate that will reduce the likelihood of hypotony in the eye. For example, in some embodiments, the flow rate can be limited to about 2.5 $\mu\text{L}/\text{min}$ or less. In some embodiments the flow rate can be limited to between about 1.9 $\mu\text{L}/\text{min}$ and about 3.1 $\mu\text{L}/\text{min}$. In other applications, a plurality of shunts 130 can be used in a single eye to conduct fluid from the anterior chamber to the uveoscleral outflow pathway. In such applications, the cumulative flow rate through the shunts preferably is within the range of about 1.9 $\mu\text{L}/\text{min}$ to about 3.1 $\mu\text{L}/\text{min}$, although the flow rate for each of the shunts can be significantly less than about 2.5 $\mu\text{L}/\text{min}$. For example, if an application called for implantation of five shunts, then each shunt 130 can be configured to have a flow rate of about 0.5 $\mu\text{L}/\text{min}$.

[0144] While the lumen is depicted in Figure 4 as extending substantially through the longitudinal center of the shunt 130, in some embodiments, the lumen can be offset from the longitudinal center of the shunt. For example, while Figure 4 depicts the shunt as having a tapered portion 144 that terminates substantially where the tapered portion 144 meets the lumen 136, the lumen 136 can be offset from the center of the shunt 130 such that lumen 136 opens along one of the sides of the tapered portion 144. Accordingly, the tapered portion 144 can terminate at a location offset from the lumen axis 142 and can extend beyond the point at

which the interior lumen 136 and the exterior tapered portion 144 meet. Additionally, the lumen can vary in direction along its length.

[0145] The shunt 130 preferably comprises any of the materials previously described above. The shunt 130 can be fabricated through conventional micro machining techniques or through procedures commonly used for fabricating optical fibers. For example, in some embodiments, the shunts 130 are drawn with a bore, or lumen, extending therethrough. In some embodiments, the tapered portion 144 at the outflow portion 134 can be constructed by shearing off an end tubular body. This can create a tapered portion 144 that can be used to puncture or incise the tissue during implantation and dilate the puncture or incision during advancement of the shunt 130. Other materials can be used for the shunt of Figure 4, and other methods of manufacturing the shunt 130 can also be used. For example, the shunt 130 can be constructed of metals or plastics, and the shunts can be machined with a bore that is drilled as described above.

[0146] The shunt 130 of Figure 4 represents a shunt having a construction that provides for the opportunity to vary the size of the shunt 130 or the lumen 136. Additionally, the shunt 130 is able to be delivered in small needles. For example, the shunt 130 can fit within a needle for the implantation procedure. The needle preferably has a size of about 18 gauge to about 23 gauge, and most preferably about 23 gauge. The shunt also need not have a unitary configuration; that is, be formed of the same piece of material. For example, a proximal portion of the shunt can be formed of glass drawn to have at least one small diameter lumen. A distal portion of the shunt can be a cap formed of a different material. The cap includes a tissue-piercing end and one or more outlet openings. Each of the one or more outlet openings communicates with at least one of the one or more lumens in the proximal portion. In one preferred mode, the cap has a conically shaped tip with a plurality of outlet openings disposed proximal of the tip's distal end.

Embodiments illustrated in Figures 5 and 6

[0147] Additional embodiments of shunts are depicted in Figures 5. Figure 5 illustrates a shunt 230 having a relatively similar construction as that of Figure 4. Figure 5 illustrates an embodiment of a shunt 230 having an elongate body with an inflow portion 232 and an outflow portion 234. A lumen(s) 236 preferably extends between an inflow end 238

and an outflow end 240. Proximate the outflow end 240 is preferably a tapered portion 244 having a construction similar to the embodiments described above with respect to Figure 4. Alternatively, the bodies of the shunts can be formed of a porous material which has one or more flow paths from the inflow portion 232 to the outflow portion 240.

[0148] Figure 5 depicts a plurality of apertures 246 extending through the wall of the shunt 230. While the apertures 246 are depicted as extending through a middle portion of the shunt 230, the apertures can extend through other portions of the shunt 230. For example, the apertures 246 can also extend through the outflow portion 234, or more particularly, through the tapered portion 244. The plurality of apertures 246 can provide several functions. One such function is that when the shunt 230 is inserted into the uveoscleral outflow pathway, the apertures 246 provide a plurality of routes through which the aqueous humor can drain. For example, once the shunt 230 is inserted into the eye, if the shunt 230 only has one outflow channel (e.g., one end of a lumen), that outflow channel can be plugged, for example, by the shunt's abutment against the interior wall of the sclera or the outer wall of the choroid. Additionally, the outflow channel can be clogged with tissue that is accumulated during the advancement of the shunt 230 through the fibrous or porous tissue. The plurality of apertures 246 provides a plurality of routes through which the fluid may flow to maintain patency and operability of the drainage shunt 230. In embodiments where the shunt has a porous body, the apertures 246 can define surface discontinuities to assist in anchoring the shunt once implanted.

[0149] Figure 6 depicts embodiments of a shunt 330 having an elongate body with an inflow portion 332 and an outflow portion 334. The body of the shunt 330 is formed of a porous material. Proximate the outflow end 340 is preferably a tapered portion 344 having a construction similar to the embodiments described above with respect to Figure 4. In some embodiments, the shunt 330 includes cylindrical recessed portions along the elongate body to provide enhanced gripping features during implantation and anchoring following implantation within the eye tissue.

[0150] The shunts depicted in Figures 5 and 6 are preferably constructed of metals, ceramics, or plastics; although several of the other materials noted herein can also be used. For example, the shunts 230, 330 can be constructed of titanium and manufactured by

conventional sintering, micro machining, laser machining, and/or electrical discharge machining. The shunt 230 of Figure 5 preferably restricts fluid flow in similar manners described above with respect to the embodiments of Figure 4. Alternatively, where the shunts 230, 330 include a porous body the cross-section and porosity can be calibrated (done to 0.5 micrometers) to control the flow rates of aqueous humor through the shunt. The flow rates through the shunts illustrated in Figures 5 and 6 preferably are similar to the rates specified above.

Embodiments illustrated in Figures 7 and 8

[0151] Figures 7-8 depict embodiments of another shunt 430 having an elongate body with an inflow portion 432 and an outflow portion 434. A lumen 436 preferably extends between an inflow end 438 and an outflow end 440. Although the illustrated embodiment includes just one lumen, other embodiments can include multiple lumens, each including the flow restriction described below.

[0152] Proximate the outflow end 440 is preferably a tapered portion 444 that decreases in a radial dimension along a lumen axis 442. In some embodiments, the shunt 430 includes cylindrical recessed portions 446 along the elongate body to provide enhanced gripping features during implantation and anchoring following implantation within the eye tissue. The lumen 436 is preferably configured to accommodate placement therein of a spiral flow channel core 448 that is configured to provide preferred flow restriction.

[0153] The core 448 is preferably configured to extend through the lumen 436 between the inflow end 438 and the outflow end 440 and includes a tortuous or spiral flow channel 450 extending generally along the exterior of the core 448. In effect, the spiral flow channel 450 provides an extended path for the flow of fluid between the two ends of the shunt 430 that is greater than a straight lumen extending between the ends of the shunt 430. The extended path provides a greater potential resistance of fluid flow through the shunt without increasing the length of the shunt.

[0154] While the core 448 is depicted in Figures 7 and 8 as having only a single spiral flow channel 450, the core 448 could have a plurality of spiral flow channels 450 for providing a plurality of flow paths through which fluid may flow through the shunt 430. For

example, the core 448 can have two or more spiral flow channels 450. Additionally, the core 448 can also have one or more straight lumens extending through the core 448.

[0155] The shunt 430 is preferably manufactured of metals, ceramics, or plastics through conventional micro machining, laser machining, or electrical discharge machining. For example, the shunt 430 can be constructed of titanium, glass, or noble metals. In some embodiments, the core 448 is made of the same material as the body of the shunt 430 while in yet further embodiments, the core 448 includes a material that is different than the body of the shunt 430.

Embodiments illustrated in Figures 9 and 10

[0156] Figures 9-10 depicts embodiment of another shunt 530 having an elongate body with an inflow portion 532 and an outflow portion 534. The shunt 530 preferably includes a lumen 536 that extends between an inflow end 538 and an outflow end 540. The shunt 530 preferably includes a tapered portion 544 at the outflow end 540 that decreases in a radial dimension along a lumen axis 542. In some embodiments, the shunt 530 includes cylindrical recessed portions 546 along the elongate body to provide enhanced gripping features during implantation and anchoring following implantation within the eye tissue.

[0157] The shunt 530 is preferably configured to conduct fluid between the anterior chamber and the uveoscleral outflow pathway with the inflow end 538 exposed to the anterior chamber and the outflow end 540 exposed to the suprachoroidal space. The shunt 530 preferably reduces the likelihood of hypotony of the eye by providing a ball-check pressure regulator. For example, when the intraocular pressure exceeds a particular pressure, the ball-check pressure regulator will open and permit fluid to flow between the anterior chamber and the uveoscleral outflow pathway. When the intraocular pressure reaches a second, lower pressure, the ball-check pressure regulator will close and limit or inhibit fluid from being conducted to the uveoscleral outflow pathway. The ball-check pressure regulator will remain closed until the intraocular pressure again reaches the particular pressure, and at which time the ball-check valve will reopen to permit or enhance drainage of fluid to the uveoscleral outflow pathway. Accordingly, the shunt 530 provides drainage of the anterior chamber through the shunt 530 based on the intraocular pressure levels and reduces the likelihood for over-draining the anterior chamber and causing hypotony.

[0158] The ball-check regulator is preferably configured to be positioned within the lumen 536 of the shunt 530 and includes a luminal spring 552 that is configured to reside within the lumen. The luminal spring 552 is depicted as a coil spring, but the luminal spring 552 can be any type of spring or biasing member that is resilient or reversibly compressible. For example, the spring 552 can comprise Nitinol or other flexible or resilient materials. The ball-check regulator also preferably includes a ball 554 that preferably has a diameter less than the diameter of the lumen 536 of the shunt 530 so as to permit movement of the ball 554 within the lumen 536 and to permit the flow of fluid between the ball 554 and the inner wall of the lumen 536 when the ball 554 resides within the lumen 536. The luminal spring 552 is preferably configured to engage a ball 554 at one end of the luminal spring 552 and to permit the ball 554 to move between different positions within the lumen 536.

[0159] A ball sleeve 556 is preferably provided within at least a portion of the lumen 536 and is positioned adjacent to the ball 554 opposite the luminal spring 552. For example, Figures 9 and 10 depict the ball sleeve 556 positioned adjacent the inflow end 538. The luminal spring 552 is depicted as extending from the outflow portion 534 toward the inflow portion 532 with the ball 554 interposed between one end of the luminal spring 552 and the ball sleeve 556. The portion of the ball sleeve 556 that is adjacent the ball 554 preferably has a lumen that has a diameter less than that of the ball 554 and limits movement of the ball 554 so the ball is unable to pass through the ball sleeve lumen. This end of the ball sleeve 556 preferably provides a ball seat 558 against which the ball 554 can rest when urged against the ball sleeve 556 by the luminal spring 552. In some embodiments, the ball 554 prevents flow when contacting seat of the ball sleeve 556; however, in other embodiments, some restricted flow can occur through the shunt even when the ball 554 rests against the seat. Such flow can occur through one or more parallel flow paths or through one or more relatively small flow paths that extend around the ball 554 and remain open when the ball 554 contacts the seat of the ball sleeve 556.

[0160] The shunt 530 also preferably includes a distal taper or cone 560 that is configured to reside at least partially within the lumen 536. The distal cone 560 preferably includes radial flanges 562 that provide a means for securing the cone 560 in place by engaging the inner wall of the lumen 536 while providing a space between the distal cone

560 and the inner wall of the lumen 536. In some embodiments, the distal cone 560 provides radial channels 562 instead of flanges through which the fluid can be conducted. The space between the inner wall of the lumen 536 and the cone 560 or the channels 562 permits fluid conducted through the lumen 536 to exit the shunt by flowing around the distal cone 560.

[0161] When the ball-check pressure regulator is assembled, the luminal spring 552 is preferably seated against the distal cone 560 on one end and presses against the ball 554 on the other end with a determined force. The ball 554 is moved against the ball seat 558 of the ball sleeve 556 as a reaction to the force of the luminal spring 552. When the shunt 530 is inserted within the eye with the inflow end 538 exposed to the anterior chamber and the outflow end 540 exposed to the suprachoroidal space, the ball 554 will be exposed to the intraocular pressure of the anterior chamber. The ball 554 will be pressed against the ball seat 558 and limit or inhibit flow of fluid past the ball 554 until the intraocular pressure exerts a force upon the ball 554 that is greater than the force applied by the luminal spring 552. When the luminal spring 552 force is overpowered by the intraocular pressure, the ball 554 will be moved down the lumen 536 away from the ball seat 558, thus permitting fluid to pass around the ball 554, through the lumen 536, and out the outflow portion 534 between the radial flanges 562 of the distal cone 560. When the intraocular pressure drops, the force pressing against the ball 554 will be reduced, and when the force applied on the ball 554 by the intraocular pressure is less than the force applied on the ball 554 by the luminal spring 552, the ball 554 will be moved through the lumen 536 until it is pressed against the ball seat 558, thus stopping the flow of fluid through the lumen 536.

Embodiments illustrated in Figures 11 and 12

[0162] Figures 11 and 12 illustrate embodiments of a generally flat pressure regulator shunt 630. The shunt 630 preferably includes an inflow portion 632 and an outflow portion 634. The inflow portion 632 preferably includes a plurality of inlets along an inflow end 638, and the outflow portion 634 preferably includes a plurality of outlets along an outflow end 640. The shunt 630 is preferably constructed of three portions: a top portion 642, a bottom portion 644, and a middle portion 646. The top portion 642 and the bottom portion 644 are preferably substantially rigid and provide a housing for the shunt 630. The top portion 642 is engageable with the bottom portion 644 by aligning a plurality of apertures

651 extending along the edges of the portions 642, 644. The two portions 642, 644 can be secured together by glue, solder, or other means for connection the portions. The bottom portion 644 preferably includes inflow apertures 648 that are configured to permit fluid to enter into a chamber 650 formed by the edges of the shunt 630. The top portion 642 preferably includes a plurality of outflow apertures 652 through which fluid can exit the chamber 650 and be discharged from the shunt 630.

[0163] A flexible or resilient middle portion 646 is preferably positioned between the two portions 642, 644. The middle portion 646 is preferably a biased membrane that is biased toward the bottom portion 644 when the shunt 630 is assembled and rests on a membrane seat 654. A plurality of apertures 653 along the edges of the membrane preferably coincides with a plurality of protrusions 655 on the top and bottom portions 642, 644. When the shunt 630 is assembled, the interlocking protrusions 655 and apertures 653 create a seal that reduces the likelihood of fluid from leaking from the chamber 650. The middle portion 646 is preferably constructed of a nitinol sputter deposited silicone membrane. The membrane preferably pressed against the bottom portion 644 and has an aperture 656 extending therethrough. The aperture 656 provides a flow path through which fluid conducted through the shunt 630 can pass when the membrane does not rest on the membrane seat 654.

[0164] In operation, the shunt is inserted into the eye with the inflow portion 632 exposed to the anterior chamber and the outflow portion 634 exposed to the uveoscleral outflow pathway. Fluid from the anterior chamber will enter into the inflow apertures 648 and fill the chamber 650 on one side of the membrane of the middle portion 646. Because the middle portion membrane 646 is biased toward the membrane seat 654, the aperture 656 will not permit fluid to flow to the other side of the membrane. When the intraocular pressure reaches an elevated level, the fluid pressure within the chamber 650 will create a force against the membrane 646 and cause the membrane 646 to disengage the membrane seat 654. As the membrane 646 disengages the membrane seat 654, the membrane aperture 656 permits fluid to flow through the membrane 646 into the other side of the chamber 650 and out the outflow apertures 652. The pressure at which the membrane will be deflected from the membrane seat 654 preferably corresponds to acceptable intraocular pressure levels.

The large surface area of the membrane 646 will provide for a low tolerance of pressure regulation.

[0165] The shunt 630 is preferably implanted following the creation of an incision in the tissue. In some embodiments, the delivery instrument may create the incision for the shunt 630 and insert the shunt 630 into the incision. In yet other embodiments, the shunt 630 can have a sharpened outflow end 640 and create the incision itself as it is advanced through the tissue.

Embodiments illustrated in Figures 13 and 14

[0166] Figures 13 and 14 depict a shunt 730 that operates under similar principles as that of the embodiments depicted in Figures 11 and 12. The shunt has an inflow portion 732 and an outflow portion 734. The inflow portion 732 includes an inflow end 738 and inflow apertures 748. The outflow portion 734 includes an outflow end 740 and outflow apertures 752. The inflow apertures 748 and the outflow apertures 752 are in fluid communication with a shunt chamber 750. The shunt 730 preferably includes four portions: a top portion 742, a spring or biasing portion 736, a membrane portion 746, and a bottom portion 744. When the shunt is assembled, the spring or biasing portion 736 preferably presses the membrane portion 746 against the bottom portion 744, thus restricting the fluid communication through the shunt 730. When the intraocular pressure reaches a certain level, the resultant force exerted against the membrane portion 746 will exceed that of the spring or biasing portion 736 and cause the membrane portion 746 to disengage the bottom portion 744. When the membrane portion 746 is not pressing against the bottom portion 744, an aperture 756 will permit fluid to flow through the membrane 746 and through an aperture 758 in the spring or biasing portion 736. During the period of flowing fluid, the aqueous humor will flow through the chamber 750 and out the shunt 730 through the outflow apertures 752.

[0167] In some embodiments of the illustrated shunts in Figures 11–14, an intraocular pressure regulator is provided having an inlet portion that provide at least one ingress flow path that include one or more influent openings. The openings preferably have a total cross-sectional flow area and communicate with an interior chamber within the shunt. In some embodiments, the shunts include an outlet portion that provides an egress flow path that has one or more effluent openings. In yet further embodiments, the shunts have a

pressure regulation valve that includes a deflectable plate with a surface area exposed to fluid within the interior chamber. The surface area preferably is substantially greater than the total cross-sectional flow area. The valve is preferably located between the interior chamber and one or more effluent openings such that movement of the deflectable plate regulates flow from the interior chamber to the one or more effluent openings. The plate preferably extends in a direction generally parallel to the inlet flow path and to the outlet flow path.

Embodiments illustrated in Figure 15

[0168] Figure 15 illustrates one embodiment of a delivery instrument 830 that can be used with at least several of the shunt embodiments described herein. The delivery instrument 830 preferably includes an open distal end 832 with a lumen 834 extending therethrough. Positioned within the lumen 834 is preferably a pusher tube 836 that is axially movable within the lumen 834, as indicated by the arrows A. A wall 838 of the delivery instrument 830 preferably extends beyond pusher tube 836 to accommodate placement within the lumen 834 of a shunt 840. The shunt 840 can be secured in position. For example, the shunt 840 can be secured by viscoelastic or mechanical interlock with the pusher tube 836 or wall 838. When the shunt is brought into position adjacent the tissue in the anterior chamber angle, the pusher tube 836 is advanced axially toward the open distal end 832 of the delivery instrument 830. As the pusher tube 836 is advanced, the shunt 840 is also advanced. When the shunt 840 is advanced through the tissue and such that it is no longer in the lumen 834 of the delivery instrument 830, the delivery instrument 830 is retracted, leaving the shunt 840 in the eye tissue.

Embodiments illustrated in Figure 16

[0169] Figure 16 illustrates another embodiment of a delivery instrument 930 that can be used with embodiments of shunts described herein. The delivery instrument 930 preferably has an open distal end 932 that is configured to receive a shunt (not shown). The delivery instrument 930 preferably has a plurality of prongs 934 that are separated circumferentially by axially-extending slots 936 in an inner cylinder 938 of the delivery instrument. The prongs 934 are preferably slightly biased radially outward and are able to be forced radially inward to grasp a shunt that resides within the open distal end 932. A slider tube 940 is preferably positioned around the inner cylinder 938 and has an inner diameter that

is slightly larger than the outer diameter of the inner cylinder 938. The slider tube 940 is preferably axially movable over the inner cylinder 938 in the direction of the arrows B. As the slider tube 940 is advanced over the prongs 934, the prongs 934 are forced radially inward and the gaps created by the slots 936 are reduced. As the prongs 934 are forced radially inward, the inner diameter of the inner cylinder 938 is reduced, and the prongs 934 can firmly grasp a shunt that is positioned therein. When the shunt is properly positioned within the eye tissue, the slider tube 940 is withdrawn to permit the prongs 934 to expand radially outwardly, and the shunt is released from the grip of the prongs 934. The delivery instrument 930 is then removed from the eye. If the shunt needs to be repositioned, the delivery instrument 930 can re-grip the shunt by placing the prongs 934 over the shunt and advancing the slider tube 940 over the prongs. The shunt can be released following its repositioning or orienting in the same manner as described above. If multiple shunts are required, a new shunt can be inserted into the delivery instrument and delivered in the same manner as described above.

Embodiments illustrated in Figures 17 and 18

[0170] Figure 17 shows a meridional section of the anterior segment of the human eye and schematically illustrates another embodiment of a delivery instrument 1130 that can be used with embodiments of shunts described herein. In Figure 17, arrows 1020 show the fibrous attachment zone of the ciliary muscle 1030 to the sclera 1040. The ciliary muscle is part of the choroid 1050. The suprachoroidal space 34 is the interface between the choroid and the sclera. Other structures in the eye include the lens 1060, the cornea 1070, the anterior chamber 32, the iris 1080, and Schlemm's canal 1090.

[0171] In some embodiments, it is desirable to implant a shunt through the fibrous attachment zone, thus connecting the anterior chamber to the uveoscleral outflow pathway, in order to reduce the intraocular pressure in glaucomatous patients. In some embodiments, it is desirable to deliver the shunt with a device that traverses the eye internally (ab interno), through a small incision in the limbus.

[0172] The delivery instrument/shunt assembly must be passed between the iris and the cornea to reach the iridocorneal angle. Therefore, the height of the delivery

instrument/shunt assembly (dimension 1095 in Figure 17) preferably is less than about 3 mm, and more preferably less than 2 mm.

[0173] The suprachoroidal space between the choroid and the sclera generally forms an angle 1110 of about 55 degrees with the optical axis 1115 of the eye. This angle, in addition to the height requirement described in the preceding paragraph, are features to consider in the geometrical design of the delivery instrument/shunt assembly.

[0174] The overall geometry of the system makes it advantageous that the delivery instrument 1130 incorporates a distal curvature 1140, as shown in Figure 17, or a distal angle 1150, as shown in Figure 18. The distal curvature (Figure 17) is expected to pass more smoothly through the corneal or scleral incision at the limbus. However, the shunt preferably is curved or flexible in this case. Alternatively, in the design of Figure 18, the shunt may be mounted on the straight segment of the delivery instrument, distal of the “elbow” or angle 1150. In this case, the shunt may be straight and relatively inflexible, and the delivery instrument can incorporate a delivery mechanism that is flexible enough to advance through the angle. In some embodiments, the shunt is a rigid tube, provided that the shunt is no longer than the length of the distal segment 1160.

[0175] The distal curvature 1140 of delivery instrument 1130 may be characterized as a radius of approximately 10 to 30 mm, and preferably about 20 mm. The distal angle of the delivery instrument depicted in Figure 18 may be characterized as approximately 90 to 170 degrees relative to an axis of the proximal segment 1170 of the delivery instrument, and preferably about 145 degrees. The angle incorporates a small radius of curvature at the “elbow” so as to make a smooth transition from the proximal segment 1170 of the delivery instrument to the distal segment 1160. The length of the distal segment 1160 may be approximately 0.5 to 7 mm, and preferably about 2 to 3 mm.

Embodiments illustrated in Figures 19 and 20

[0176] Figure 19 illustrates in cross-section another embodiment of a shunt 2000 that is operable to drain fluid from the anterior chamber to the suprachoroidal space. The shunt can include one or more lumens 2010, a circumferential wall 2020, and a tip 2030. The tip may be pointed (for pushing through resistant tissue), or rounded (to be incapable of penetrating through tissue such as the sclera). One or more side holes 2040 in the wall permit

the egress of aqueous fluid flowing from the anterior chamber through lumen(s) 2010. The tip 2030 may be comprised of, for example, but without limitation, a thermoplastic material such as polyurethane or Pebax or polymethylmethacrylate or polyimide, or elastomeric material such as silicone, or metal material such as titanium, steel, or nitinol. The tip 2030 may be unitary with or be attached to the longitudinal body section 2050 of the shunt by molding, or adhesive bonding, or thermal bonding. The longitudinal body may be comprised of, for example, but without limitation, a thermoplastic material such as polyurethane or Pebax or polymethylmethacrylate or polyimide, or elastomeric material such as silicone, or metal material such as titanium, steel, or nitinol. The body material is preferably flexible, such as polyurethane or Pebax or silicone. However, it may be comprised of rigid material such as polymethylmethacrylate or metal. In this case, the shunt may be made flexible by creating one or more indentations, or by etching or machining or laser processing a relief pattern in the wall of the shunt, such is known in the art of design and fabrication of shunts for the coronary arteries. The shunt does not need to provide a solid tubular conduit between the anterior chamber and the suprachoroidal space, as the shunt will be surrounded by tissue, and the fluid flow will thus be constrained within the tubular envelope created by the shunt.

[0177] In some embodiments, the flexible shunt has an outer diameter of approximately 0.1 to 2.0 mm diameter, preferably about 0.4 mm. The length of the shunt is approximately 0.5 to 7 mm, preferably about 2 to 4 mm.

[0178] The shunt may also incorporate fixation features 2060, such as flexible radial extensions. The extensions may be separate pieces attached to the shunt, or may be formed by slitting the shunt wall, and thermally forming or mechanically deforming the extensions radially outward, as shown in Figure 20. If the extensions 2060 are separate pieces, they may be comprised of flexible material such as nitinol or polyimide (and may assume an extended shape once implanted in tissue). The extensions 2060 may be located at the anterior or posterior ends of the shunt, or both, to inhibit extrusion of the shunt from its intended location. The flexibility of the fixation features will facilitate entry through the corneal incision, and also through the ciliary muscle attachment tissue.

Embodiments illustrated in Figure 21

[0179] Figure 21 shows another embodiment of a system that can be used to perform a variety of methods or procedures. The curved shaft of a delivery instrument 2100 can be hollow, and the shunt 2110 can be slidably mounted on the outer diameter of the delivery instrument. The shunt is preferably flexible. A flexible, slidable stylet 2120 can be inserted through the shaft of the delivery instrument, and pushes against the inner wall of shunt tip 2130. The stylet 2120 can be comprised of a flexible material with a high modulus of elasticity, such as stainless steel, and preferably nitinol. The proximal end of the delivery instrument is not shown, but provides for a sliding mechanism to advance and retract the stylet 2120 by the operator. The mechanism may be incorporated into a handle, such as the push-pull controls in the handles of electrophysiology catheters known in the art; or the proximal end of the stylet 2120 may extend outward from the proximal end of the shaft, such that the operator may grasp it directly to push and pull it.

[0180] In some embodiments, during clinical use, the shunt and shaft assembly can be advanced together through the limbus, across the iris, and through the ciliary muscle until the shunt tip is located in the suprachoroidal space. The operator then simultaneously pushes on the stylet 2120 while pulling back on the delivery instrument 2100, such that the shunt tip maintains its location in the suprachoroidal space. The shunt 2110 is released distally from the delivery instrument 2100, and the delivery instrument 2100 is retracted proximally. At this point, the shunt 2110 is still riding on the distal end of the stylet 2120. The next step is to withdraw the stylet 2120, leaving the shunt 2110 in place in the tissue. Finally, the delivery instrument 2100 is withdrawn from the anterior chamber through the incision.

[0181] A shunt and delivery instrument assembly, including a flexible stylet, similar to that shown in Figure 21 can also be used in conjunction with the angled delivery instrument of Figure 18 and a rigid tube shunt. The operation is similar to that described in the preceding paragraph.

Embodiments illustrated in Figures 22 and 23

[0182] Figures 22, 23A and 23B show an example of a delivery instrument for a shunt. In some embodiments, the shunt is delivered through a needle with a cutting tip 2140.

The shunt can be loaded inside of the shaft of the needle for delivery through the eye. The needle can be curved on the side of the needle opposite to the beveled opening 2150, as illustrated in Figure 23(a). This allows the curved part of the needle to take a “downward” direction without appreciably affecting the effective height of the device. This geometry can be advantageous for passage through the anterior chamber between the iris and the cornea. At the same time, the curve permits the sharp tip of the needle to follow the angle of the ciliary muscle/ sclera interface (angle 1110 shown in Figure 17). Further, the design of the curved tip as shown in Figure 23A can limit the depth of the dissection of the ciliary muscle from the sclera to the minimum depth necessary to cut through the fibrous attachment tissue. This depth is estimated to be less than about 0.5 mm. In addition, the curvature of the tip act as a baffle to redirect the shunt as it is pushed distally outward through the needle. In other embodiments, the needle cutting tip is straight, as illustrated in Figure 23B.

Embodiments illustrated in Figure 24

[0183] Figure 24 shows another embodiment of a system that can be used to perform a variety of methods or procedures. The shunt 2200 is deflected “downward” at an angle that parallels the suprachoroidal space. The depth of insertion can be determined by the length of the pushrod 2220, whose travel can be limited by the stop 2230. It is preferred that the pushrod ends at the proximal edge of the opening of the needle 2240. In this way, the shunt will not be pushed below the anterior surface of the ciliary muscle.

Embodiments illustrated in Figure 25

[0184] Figure 25 shows another embodiment of a system that can be used to perform a variety of methods or procedures. In the illustrated embodiment, the shunt 2200 is mounted on a curved or angled shaft 2250. The shaft 2250 can be tubular (as shown), or solid and the distal end 2260 can be sharpened. The shunt 2200 can be curved with approximately the same radius as the delivery device, so that the shunt can be relatively stiff and still slide along the shaft. In some embodiments, a pusher tube 2270 causes the shunt to slide distally along the shaft and be released. In operation in some embodiments, the sharpened end 2260 makes an incision in the fibrous tissue attaching the ciliary muscle and the sclera. In some embodiments, the distance between the sharpened tip 2260 and the distal end of the shunt determines how deeply the tissue may be incised. After making the cut, the

operator can advance the pusher tube 2270 while holding the mounting shaft 2250 fixed. This action causes the shunt 2200 to be advanced into the incision. The distance of shunt advance can be determined by the length of the pusher tube 2270, whose travel can be limited by a stop, as depicted in Figure 24.

[0185] Further embodiments of the invention incorporate injection of viscoelastic through the shunt or through the shaft 2250 in order to accomplish posterior dissection of the suprachoroidal tissue, thereby creating a volumetric chamber or reservoir for aqueous humor. In addition or in the alternative, therapeutic agents (e.g., a hyperosmotic agent) can be delivered into the suprachoroidal space through the shunt 2220 or through the shaft 2250

Embodiments illustrated in Figure 26

[0186] Figure 26 illustrates various embodiments of a cap 2280 for a shunt 2290 that is operable to drain fluid from the anterior chamber to the suprachoroidal space. The cap 2280 can include a tissue-piercing end 2300 and one or more outlet openings 2310. Each of the one or more outlet openings 2310 can communicate with at least one of the one or more lumens 2320. In some embodiments cap can have a conically shaped tip 2330 with a plurality of outlet openings 2310 disposed proximal of the tip's distal end. In other embodiments, the cap can have a tapered angle tip 2330. The tip 2330 can be sufficiently sharp to pierce eye tissue near the scleral spur of the eye. The tip also can be sufficiently blunt so as not to substantially penetrate scleral tissue of the eye. In some embodiments, the conically shaped tip 2330 facilitates delivery of the shunt to the desired location. In some embodiments, the cap 2280 has an outlet opening 2310 on a side surface to allow fluid flow. In the embodiment illustrated in Figure 26a, there is a plurality of outlet openings 2310 on the conical surface of the cap. In the embodiment illustrated in Figure 26b, the cap has a plurality of outlet openings 2310 on a side surface to allow fluid flow. The openings 2310 on the cap can facilitate fluid flow through the shunt. The openings 2310 may provide an alternate route for fluid flow which is beneficial in case the primary outflow portion of the shunt becomes blocked.

Embodiments illustrated in Figure 27

[0187] Figure 27 shows another embodiment of a system that can be used to perform a variety of methods or procedures. The shunt 2350 illustrated in Figure 27 has a

portion 2360 which has an accordion-like structure. The accordion-like structure provides flexibility. Figure 27(a) depicts the accordion-like portion 2360 in an expanded configuration. Figure 27(b) depicts the accordion-like portion 2360 in a compressed configuration. Figure 27(c) depicts the accordion-like portion 2360 in a curved or bended configuration.

Embodiments illustrated in Figure 28

[0188] Figure 28 illustrates another embodiment of a shunt 2370 that is operable to drain fluid from the anterior chamber to the suprachoroidal space. In the illustrated embodiment, the shunt 2370 has a reed-type valve 2380 to regulate flow. One end 2390 of the reed valve 2380 may be fixed to a portion of the shunt. The body of the reed valve 2380 is capable of being deflected 2400 in order to allow flow. The reed valve 2380 illustrated in Figure 28a is shown in a closed configuration. Pressure from fluid in the anterior chamber can deflect the body of the reed valve 2380, thereby causing the valve to open, as depicted in Figure 28b.

Embodiments illustrated in Figure 29

[0189] Figure 29 shows another embodiment of a system that can be used to perform a variety of methods or procedures. In the illustrated embodiment, a delivery instrument includes a distal end 2500 having a spatula shape. The spatula shape can have a sharpened forward edge 2510. The spatula shape can include a recess 2520 to contain the shunt. The recess can include a pusher 2530 or other suitable means to push out or eject the shunt.

Embodiments illustrated in Figure 30

[0190] Figure 30 shows another embodiment of a system that can be used to perform a variety of methods or procedures. Multiple shunts 2600 are configured to be delivered during a single procedure. In the illustrated embodiment, the shunts 2600 (which are schematically shown) are arranged tandemly. The shunt can include a tip protector 2610 at one end. The tip protector 2610 can comprise a recess shaped to receive and protect, for example, the tip 2620 of an adjacent shunt. The tip protector 2610 is shaped to contact the sides 2630 of the generally conical tip while protecting the more tapered tip, or end 2640,

from impact. The delivery instrument 2650 can include a pusher 2660 (e.g. a threaded push rod) or other suitable means to push out or eject each shunt 2600.

Embodiments illustrated in Figure 31

[0191] Figure 31 shows another embodiment of a system that can be used to perform a variety of methods or procedures. Delivery of the shunt 2700 is achieved by applying a driving force at or near the distal end 2710 of the shunt 2700 using, for example, a pusher 2720. The driving force can be a pushing force applied to the distal end 2710 of the shunt 2700. The delivery device alternatively can extend through or around the shunt to supply a pulling force to draw the shunt through tissue.

Embodiments illustrated in Figure 32

[0192] Figure 32 shows another embodiment of a system 2800 that can be used to perform a variety of methods or procedures. A spring-loaded pusher system 2800 can be used for delivery of a shunt. The spring-loaded pusher 2810 preferably includes a button 2820 operably connected to a hinged rod device 2830. The distal portion 2835 of the hinged rod device 2830 engages a depression 2840 in the surface of the pusher 2810, keeping the spring 2850 of the pusher 2810 in a compressed conformation. When the user pushes downwards 2860 on the button 2820, the distal portion 2835 of the hinged rod device 2830 is disengaged from the depression 2840, thereby allowing the spring 2850 to decompress, thereby advancing the pusher 2810 forward.

Embodiments illustrated in Figure 33

[0193] Figure 33 shows another embodiment of a system that can be used to perform a variety of methods or procedures. In the illustrated embodiment, an over-the-wire system 2920 is used to deliver the shunt 2900. The shunt 2900 can have a generally rounded distal portion 2915 at the distal end. The radius of the distal portion can be about 70 to about 500 microns. The distal portion 2915 can gradually increase in cross-sectional size towards the proximal direction, preferably at a generally constant taper or radius or in a parabolic manner as shown.

[0194] In some embodiments, the implant comprises one or more openings 2905 communicating with an interior chamber, or lumen, within the implant. Preferably, the edges of the openings are rounded as shown. In addition or in the alternative, the implant can

include other exterior surface irregularities (e.g., annular grooves) to anchor the implant, as described above.

[0195] In some embodiments the shunt can have a flange 2910 at a proximal portion of the implant. Preferably, the flange has sharp edges and corners as shown. The sharp edges and corners tend to inhibit cell proliferation near the influent end of the implant.

[0196] The wire or similar elongated structure 2920 can function as a trocar. Preferably, the wire 2920 is self-trephinating. The radius of the tip of the distal portion 2930 of the wire 2920 can be about 10 to about 500 microns. In some embodiments, the radius of the tip of the distal portion 2930 of the wire 2920 can be about 70 to about 200 microns. The distal portion 2930 of wire 2920 can increase in cross-sectional size towards the proximal direction. In some embodiments, the increase can be in a parabolic manner. In the depicted embodiment, the wire 2920 has a distal portion 2930 having a gradual increase in cross-sectional size in a parabolic manner towards the proximal direction. The wire 2920 can have a rounded distal tip of the distal portion 2930. In other embodiments, the distal portion can be tapered. The wire can be superelastic, flexible, or relatively inflexible with respect to the shunt. The wire can be pre-formed to have a certain shape. The wire can be curved. The wire can have shape memory, or be elastic. In some embodiments, the wire is a pull wire. The wire can be a steerable catheter.

[0197] In some embodiments, a pusher 2950 can be used in conjunction with the wire 2920 to aid in delivery of the shunt 2900. The pusher 2950 can be used to hold the shunt 2900 in place as the wire 2920 is withdrawn proximally after the shunt 2900 has been delivered to a desired location.

[0198] The pusher 2950, trocar 2920 and implant 2900 preferably are sized to fit and move (e.g., slide) within an outer sheath or needle. The needle preferably includes a sharpened distal end to penetrate tissue (e.g., corneal tissue) when accessing the anterior chamber of the eye.

Embodiments illustrated in Figures 34-36

[0199] Figures 34-36 illustrate other embodiments of a shunt that is operable to conduct fluid from the anterior chamber to the suprachoroidal space. In the embodiments illustrated in Figures 34A, 34B and 35, the shunt 3000 has an outflow configuration 3010

wherein the flow exits normal ($\pm 90^\circ$) from the axis of the shunt through a side port exit hole 3020. This outflow configuration can prevent adhesion and/or encapsulation of the tissues that make up the supraciliary or suprachoroidal space (e.g., choroid and sclera and any other membranes within) by, for example, the fluid pressure created, and/or a rinsing effect. As such, the outflow pathway is kept clear and unobstructed. In addition, in this outflow configuration, the flow can exit and directly impinge the tissues that form the uveoscleral outflow pathway. This flow can push and hold the surrounding tissue away from the shunt, thereby preventing tissue adhesion to the shunt 3000 at the location of the fluid path. The flow can also help to create a stenting effect, i.e., holding the space open and enlarging. In some embodiments, the stenting can facilitate absorption into the choroid and/or the sclera by increasing the contact area between the pool of aqueous humor and the tissues. The side port exit holes 3020 also can prevent tissues and cells from accumulating in an axial hole during the insertion operation, i.e., the scraping/snowplowing of cells/tissues that could get lodged in the tip and block flow.

[0200] In the embodiment illustrated in Figure 35, the shunt 3000 has an outflow configuration 3100 wherein the flow exits the device not axially, nor at a 90° angle to the device main axis, but at an angle that bisects the two options, i.e., $30-60^\circ$. This outflow configuration can help to prevent tissue adhesion and provide the other benefits described above. In addition, this outflow configuration allows the flow to exit the shunt without the slowdown that occurs when it is turned at a 90° angle. That is, the configuration presents a less restrictive flow path. This outflow configuration consequently can provide a greater opportunity for the flow to be directed deeper into the suprachoroidal space.

[0201] The outflow configuration shown in Figures 34A, 34B and 35 can be combined with one or more axial outlets, as shown in Figure 36. In the embodiment illustrated in Figure 36, the shunt 3000 has a combination of axial 3200 and side port 3300 flow. In this embodiment, the relative sizes of the ports 3400, 3500 can be varied to achieve the correct balance between the two flow directions. For example, the axial flow lumen can be sized down so that the side port openings 3400 receive an adequate amount of flow to realize the advantages of side port flow 3300 without sacrificing axial flow 3200 and maximal flow penetration deep into the uveoscleral outflow pathway. In other words, each

side port opening 3400 has a size 3300 larger than the size 3200 of the axial 3300 port 3500. Alternatively, in some applications, the axial port 3500 can be larger than one or more, or all of the side port 3400.

[0202] The shunt aspects described in connection with Figures 34-36 can be incorporated into other embodiments of the shunt, such as the embodiment depicted in Figure 33.

Embodiments illustrated in Figures 37A and 37B

[0203] Figures 37A and 37B show another embodiments of a system that can be used to perform a variety of methods and procedures. The shunt 3600 illustrated in these figures has a solid and rounded tip with a central lumen 3800 (as illustrated in Figure 37A) or without a central lumen (as illustrated in Figure 38B).

Embodiments illustrated in Figure 38

[0204] Figure 38 shows another embodiment of a system that can be used to perform a variety of methods or procedures. The shunt 3900 illustrated in Figure 37 has a reduced diameter B at the point where the fluid exits the stent, compared with the inlet orifice diameter A. The reduced diameter B can result in an increased fluid velocity V_B , compared to the fluid inlet velocity V_A . The increased fluid velocity can help to keep tissue at bay, thereby preventing adhesion to the shunt. The increased fluid velocity can also create space for absorption of fluid into the choroid and sclera. The increased fluid velocity can also cause deeper penetration of the fluid once it exits the shunt.

Embodiments illustrated in Figures 39 and 40A-B

[0205] Figures 39, 40A and 40B shows another embodiment of a system that can be used to perform a variety of methods or procedures. A matrix, or grating 4100 can be positioned within the uveoscleral outflow pathway to create, and hold open a space between the ciliary muscle bundles, or the choroid and the sclera, into which fluid can flow. The grating 4100 can effectively decrease or essentially eliminate the resistance that the fluid would encounter upon entering the uveoscleral outflow pathway from a single or double entry point from the anterior chamber, and establish open fluid communication, or, in longer embodiments, contact to a large surface area of choroid and/or sclera for absorption and dissipation. The grating 4100 can be made from a number of biocompatible materials such

as, for example, metals like gold, platinum, tantalum, titanium, etc., or from a biocompatible polymer such as silicone, PMMA, polyimide, polyether sulfone (PES), styrene-b-isobutylene-b-styrene (SIBS), ceramic, or from a combination of materials, such as a coating, plating, or coextrusion of one of the mentioned materials with another one of the mentioned or other materials. The grating 4100 can be separate, or integral with a shunt that establishes a patent opening from the anterior chamber 4105 to the suprachoroidal space 4110. As shown in Figure 40B, the grating 4100 can be injected or otherwise placed through a small opening such as a tube 4120 and unfold or otherwise expand once in the suprachoroidal space so that it can be delivered ab interno. In other embodiments, the grating can be placed ab externo. The grating 4100 can also include one or more therapeutic agent, which is carried by, embedded within, integrated with and/or coated on the grating 4100.

Embodiments illustrated in Figures 41A-J

[0206] Figures 41A-J show other embodiments of a system that can be used to perform a variety of methods or procedures. The shunts 4200 illustrated in Figures 41A-J include a retention feature(s) to engage the fibrous muscle adhesion 4210 (Figure 41A) that attaches the choroid to the sclera at its furthest anterior extent of the choroid. The feature can help prevent the stent from moving once implanted. The feature can also give the surgeon tactile feedback as to the ideal axial positioning of the device. Such a feature can be in the form of a circumferential groove, a protruding anchor, a flange, etc.

[0207] The shunt 4200a illustrated in Figure 41A includes an annular barb 4215 that projects from the outer surface of the shunt 4200a. The shunt 4200b illustrated in Figure 41B includes a feature formed by wire 4232 which is placed through a hole 4230 in the shunt 4232. Preferably, the wire is preformed and elastic, which allows it to fold down during implantation using a delivery device. The shunt 4200c illustrated in Figure 41C includes two annular barbs 4234, 4236 that are arranged back-to-back. As such, the barbs 4234, 4236 form an annular groove about the shunt 4200c. Figure 41D illustrates another embodiment of a shunt 4200d with an annular barb 4252. In this embodiment, the barb 4252 is formed apart from a tubular body of the implant 4250 and is attached thereto with suitable mechanical fasteners (e.g., detents and grooves) or chemical adhesives (e.g., cyanoacrylate). Figure 41E illustrates another embodiment of the barb 4252' with a cylindrical shape. Figure 41F

illustrates an embodiment of a shunt 4200f that includes a plurality of barbs 4256, 4260 that are arranged to form an annular groove on the exterior of the shunt 4200f. Figure 41G illustrates yet another embodiment of a shunt 4200g with a plurality of annular ribs 4270 formed on an exterior surface of the shunt 4200g. In some embodiments, the retention feature(s) may be cut deep enough to make the body of a shunt made from plastic or metal flexible enough for insertion through bent tube, such as a cannula, and to conform to anatomy after placement. Figure 41H shows a plurality of retention features 4280 on the body of a shunt 4200H which have been sized to weaken the wall of the shunt and to provide flexibility of the tube. Any of these retention features can be used with the above-described embodiments of shunts and delivery devices.

Embodiments illustrated in Figures 42A-D

[0208] Figures 42A-D show other embodiments of a system that can be used to perform a variety of methods or procedures. The shunts illustrated in Figures 42A-D are made of a swellable hydrophilic polymer 4300. The swellable hydrophilic polymer can be, for example, swellable hydrophilic aliphatic polyurethane. Swelling of the polymer after insertion of the shunt can create a tight fit in the tissue, as shown in Figures 42A and 42B. The swellable material can be applied by, for example, dip coating, spray coating, or coextrusion to a core tubular structure comprised of a nonswellable polymeric or metal or ceramic material. Alternatively, the stent can be molded or extruded from the swellable hydrophilic material. In either of these cases, the outer surface can be covered by a thin layer of a biodegradable polymer 4310 such as polylactic acid, as shown in Figure 42A. The layer of biodegradable polymer can prevent the swellable polymer from swelling until after it is implanted. A layer of viscoelastic may also accomplish this purpose. The swellable material may be formed as one or two “donuts” 4320 to further enhance retention of the stent, and prevention of anterior or posterior migration. The swellable material may also be designed to form a flow-dispersing component upon swelling.

Variations

[0209] In some embodiments, the shunt can facilitate delivery of a therapeutic agent. The therapeutic agent can be, for example, heparin, TGF-beta, an intraocular pressure-lowering drug, and an anti-proliferative agent. In some embodiments, the therapeutic agent is introduced concurrently with the delivery of the shunt to the eye. The therapeutic agent can

be part of the shunt itself. For example, the therapeutic agent can be embedded in the material of the shunt, or coat at least a portion of the shunt. The therapeutic agent may be present on various portions of the shunt. For example, the therapeutic agent may be present on the distal end of the shunt, or the proximal end of the shunt. The shunt can include combination of therapeutic agents. The different therapeutic agents can be separated or combined. One kind of therapeutic agent can be present at the proximal end of the shunt, and a different kind of therapeutic agent can be present at the distal end of the shunt. For example, an anti-proliferative agent may be present at the distal end of the shunt to prevent growth, and a growth-promoting agent may be applied to the proximal end of the shunt to promote growth. In some embodiments, the therapeutic agent is delivered through the implant to the desired location in the eye, such as the uveoscleral outflow pathway. In some embodiments, the therapeutic agent is delivered to the uveoscleral outflow pathway in combination with a therapeutic agent delivered via trans pars plana vitrectomy, thereby delivering a therapeutic agent to both sides of the retina. In some embodiments, the shunt can improve access of topical medication to the posterior uvea. In some embodiments, the shunt is used to delivery a topical medication to treat a chorio-retinal disease.

[0210] If desired, more than one shunt of the same or different type may be implanted. For example, the shunts disclosed herein may be used in combination with trabecular bypass shunts, such as those disclosed in U.S. Patent Publication 2004/0050392 (Appendix A), and those described in U.S. Patent Publication 2005/0271704, filed March 18, 2005, the entirety of which is incorporated herein by reference and made a part of this specification and disclosure. Additionally, implantation may be performed in combination with other surgical procedures, such as cataract surgery. All or a portion of the shunt may be coated, e.g. with heparin, preferably in the flow path, to reduce blood thrombosis or tissue restenosis.

[0211] If desired, a multiplicity of shunts having different flow capacities and/or lumen sizes may be implanted. For example, a single “large” lumen stent can be implanted first, and subsequent, depending on the pressure response to the first stent, a second can be added with potentially smaller flow capacity in order to “fine tune” the desired IOP. For example, the IOP of a first patient can safely be brought down to approximately 12-18 mm

Hg, and once the flow capacity of the first stent is matched with the IOP reduction, a calculation can be made as to what additional outflow is required to achieve target pressures of, for example, approximately 8-12 mmHg. An appropriately sized stent can be added to accomplish the target pressure. Both stents can be proactively added at the same time based on calculated outflow requirements. Alternatively, the stents can be added sequentially as described above based on the measured effect of the first stent.

[0212] While certain embodiments of the disclosure have been described, these embodiments have been presented by way of example only, and are not intended to limit the scope of the disclosure. Indeed, the novel methods, systems, and devices described herein may be embodied in a variety of other forms. For example, embodiments of one illustrated or described shunt can be combined with embodiments of another illustrated or described shunt. Moreover, the shunts described above can be utilized for other purposes. For example, the shunts can be used to drain fluid from the anterior chamber to other locations of the eye or outside the eye. Furthermore, various omissions, substitutions and changes in the form of the methods, systems, and devices described herein may be made without departing from the spirit of the disclosure.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for treating an ocular disorder in a patient, comprising:
a drainage implant which, following implantation at an implantation site, conducts fluid from the anterior chamber to a uveoscleral outflow pathway of an eye;
and
a delivery instrument for implanting the drainage implant, said instrument having a distal end sufficiently sharp to penetrate eye tissue at an insertion site near the limbus of the patient's eye, and being sufficiently long to advance the implant transocularly from the insertion site across the anterior chamber to the implantation site, said instrument having a sufficiently small cross section such that the insertion site self seals without suturing upon withdrawal of the instrument from the eye, said instrument being comprised of plural members longitudinally moveable relative to each other and a seal between said members to prevent aqueous humor from passing between the members proximal the seal when the instrument is in the eye.
2. The system of Claim 1, wherein an outer diameter of the delivery instrument is not greater than about 18 gauge and is not smaller than about 21 gauge.
3. The system of Claim 1, wherein the plural members of the delivery instrument comprises an outer incision member and an inner implantation member that interacts with the implant.
4. The system of Claim 3, wherein the inner implantation member comprises a flexible torcar that passes through the implant.
5. The system of Claim 3, wherein the implantation member is less than 20 gauge yet larger than 27 gauge.
6. The system of Claim 3, wherein the delivery instrument additionally comprises a seal between at least portions of the incision member and the implantation member.
7. The system of Claim 6, wherein the seal comprises a coating between slip-fit surfaces of the incision and implantation members.
8. The system of Claim 6, wherein the seal is disposed proximate of the drainage implant when carried by the delivery instrument.

9. The system of Claim 1, wherein the delivery instrument includes a distal end having a beveled shape.

10. The system of Claim 1, wherein the delivery instrument includes a distal end having a spatula shape with a sharpened edge.

11. The system of Claim 1, wherein the drainage implant has a distal end that is sufficiently sharp to pass through eye tissue yet blunt enough to not substantially penetrate scleral tissue.

12. The system of Claim 1, wherein the drainage implant includes at least one lumen extending between an inlet, which is disposed within the anterior chamber once implanted, and an outlet, which is disposed within the physiologic outflow path once implanted.

13. The system of Claim 12, wherein the drainage implant additionally includes a flow regulator to control fluid flow through the at least one lumen.

14. The system of Claim 13, wherein the flow regulator includes a pressure relief valve that opens when fluid pressure within the anterior chamber exceeds a preset level.

15. The system of Claim 14, wherein the pressure relief valve comprises a ball, a ball seat and a biasing member urging the ball towards the ball seat.

16. The system of Claim 12, wherein at least a portion of the at least one lumen has a sufficiently small cross-sectional area along a sufficiently long length to restrict fluid flow through said lumen to a rate not to exceed about 5 $\mu\text{l}/\text{min}$.

17. The system of Claim 12, wherein the portion of the at least one lumen has a sufficiently small cross-sectional area along a sufficiently long length to restrict fluid flow through said lumen to a rate not to exceed about 2.5 $\mu\text{l}/\text{min}$.

18. The system of Claim 1, wherein the drainage implant has a cylindrical body.

19. The system of Claim 1, wherein the drainage implant has a length between its inlet and outlet portions ranging between about 1 mm and 3 mm.

20. The system of Claim 1, wherein the drainage implant has an overall length not greater than 5 mm.

21. The system of Claim 1, wherein the drainage implant has sufficient length between the inlet and outlet portions such that, following implantation, the inlet portion is

disposed within the anterior chamber and the outlet portion is disposed with the uveoscleral outflow pathway.

22. A system for treating an ocular disorder in a patient, comprising:

a shunt including central lumen that terminates at an outlet opening at a distal end of the shunt, the shunt further including a transitional region that continually decreases in the radial dimension toward the distal end, the shunt having a sufficient length such that, following implantation at an implantation site, the lumen conducts fluid from the anterior chamber to a uveoscleral outflow pathway of an eye; and

a delivery instrument for implanting the shunt, said instrument comprising:

a outer needle with a distal end sufficiently sharp to penetrate eye tissue at an insertion site near the limbus of the patient's eye;

an implantation member being sufficiently long to advance the shunt transocularly from the insertion site across the anterior chamber to the implantation site, the implantation member being movable along an axis of the delivery instrument; and

a trocar cooperating with the implantation member and being movable relative to the implantation member, the trocar being sized to extend through the central lumen of the shunt and having a distal portion that narrows toward a distal end of the trocar, the distal end of the trocar being rounded.

23. The system of Claim 22, wherein the implantation member includes a curved or angled distal portion.

24. The system of Claim 23, wherein the shunt has a length less than a length of the distal portion of the implantation member.

25. The system of Claim 22, wherein a least a distal portion of the trocar is flexible.

26. The system of Claim 22, wherein the distal end of the trocar has a radius of curvature not greater than a radius of the central lumen.

27. The system of Claim 22, wherein the implantation member includes a lumen through which the trocar extends, and a distal shoulder that interacts with shunt.

28. The system of claim 22, wherein said needle has a sufficiently small cross section such that the insertion site self seals without suturing upon withdrawal of the instrument from the eye.

29. The system of Claim 22, wherein at least one of the needle, the implantation member and the trocar include a coating to inhibit aqueous humor flow through the delivery instrument.

30. The system of Claim 22, wherein the shunt includes a therapeutic agent.

31. An ocular implant, comprising:

a substantially straight, rigid, generally cylindrical body of a length no greater than 5 mm, the body having a tip that narrows toward an end, at least one inlet communicating with at least one inner lumen that terminates at one or more outlets, the lumen having a sufficient length to extend from an anterior chamber to a suprachoroidal space of an eye; and

means for regulating fluid flow through the lumen.

32. The implant of Claim 31, wherein the tip is sufficiently sharp to pierce eye tissue near the scleral spur of the eye.

33. The implant of Claim 32, wherein the tip is sufficiently blunt so as not to substantially penetrate scleral tissue of the eye.

34. The implant of Claim 31, wherein the cylindrical body is formed at least in part of silica.

35. The implant of Claim 31, wherein the generally cylindrical body includes at least one surface irregularity.

36. The implant of Claim 35, wherein the surface irregularity comprises an annular groove.

37. The implant of Claim 31, wherein the cylindrical body has an outer surface of which at least a portion is porous.

38. The implant of Claim 31, wherein the cylindrical body comprises material that includes a drug.

39. The implant of Claim 31, wherein the cylindrical body includes a coating which includes a therapeutic agent.

40. The implant of Claim 39, wherein the therapeutic agent is selected from the group consisting of: heparin, TGF-beta, an intraocular pressure-lowering drug, and an anti-proliferative agent.

41. The implant of Claim 31 further comprising a biodegradable material in or on the implant.

42. The implant of Claim 41, wherein the biodegradable material is selected from the group consisting of poly(lactic acid), polyethylene-vinyl acetate, poly(lactic-co-glycolic acid), poly(D,L-lactide), poly(D,L-lactide-co-trimethylene carbonate), collagen, heparinized collagen, poly(caprolactone), poly(glycolic acid), and a copolymer.

43. The implant of Claim 31, wherein a proximal end of body includes a receptacle shaped to receive a tip of a like-shaped implant and to engage the like-shaped implant proximal of said tip of the like-shaped implant.

44. An intraocular implant comprising:

an inlet portion providing an ingress flow path comprising one or more influent openings having a total cross-sectional flow area and communicating with an interior chamber within the implant;

an outlet portion providing an egress flow path comprising one or more effluent openings; and

a pressure regulation valve having a deflectable plate with a surface area exposed to fluid within the interior chamber, said surface area being substantially greater than the total cross-sectional flow area, the valve being located between the interior chamber and the one or more effluent openings such that movement of the deflectable plate regulates flow from the interior chamber to the one or more effluent openings, the plate extending in a direction generally parallel to the inlet flow path and to the outlet flow path.

45. The implant of Claim 44 additionally comprising a distal edge that is sufficiently sharp to pierce eye tissue near the scleral spur of the eye, and that is disposed closer to the outlet portion than to the inlet portion.

46. The implant of Claim 45, wherein the distal edge is sufficiently blunt so as not to substantially penetrate scleral tissue of the eye.

47. The implant of Claim 44, wherein the implant is formed at least in part by a material that includes a drug.

48. The implant of Claim 44 additionally comprising a coating over at least a portion of the implant that includes a therapeutic agent.

49. The implant of Claim 48, wherein the therapeutic agent is selected from the group consisting of: heparin, TGF-beta, an intraocular pressure-lowering drug, and an anti-proliferative agent.

50. The implant of Claim 44 further comprising a biodegradable material in or on the implant.

51. The implant of Claim 50, wherein the biodegradable material is selected from the group consisting of poly(lactic acid), polyethylene-vinyl acetate, poly(lactic-co-glycolic acid), poly(D,L-lactide), poly(D,L-lactide-co-trimethylene carbonate), collagen, heparinized collagen, poly(caprolactone), poly(glycolic acid), and a copolymer.

52. A system for treating glaucoma comprising:

a plurality of implants, each having a distal end sufficiently sharp to extend through tissue into a physiologic outflow pathway; and

an instrument having a chamber in which the implants are loaded for serial delivery into eye tissue;

wherein at least a first implant of the plurality of implants includes a recess that is sized to receive a distal end of a second implant of said plurality of implants, the recess being shaped so that with the implants contacting each other when placed in tandem in the instrument, the distal end of the second implant does not bear against the first implant.

53. The system of Claim 52, wherein at least one of the implants includes a lumen.

54. The system of Claim 52, wherein at least one of the implants comprises a therapeutic drug.

55. A method for reducing intraocular pressure in an eye of a mammal, comprising:

introducing an ocular implant into the anterior chamber of the eye, the ocular implant having proximal and distal ends;

cutting eye tissue using a distal portion of the implant at a location posterior of a scleral spur;

advancing the implant from the anterior chamber into the cut eye tissue such that the distal end is located in the suprachoroidal space and the proximal end is located in the anterior chamber; and

conducting aqueous humor between the proximal and distal ends of the implant.

56. The method of Claim 55, further comprising transocularly advancing the implant from the site of introduction across the anterior chamber to a location proximate a scleral spur of the eye.

57. The method of Claim 55, wherein advancing involves moving the implant having a distal portion that is rigid in at least an axial direction through eye tissue.

58. The method of Claim 55, further comprising regulating flow of aqueous humor conducted through the implant.

59. The method of Claim 58, wherein regulating flow of aqueous humor comprises varying between at least first and second operational states in which flow through of aqueous humor is more restricted in a first state and less restricted in a second state.

60. The method of Claim 59, wherein increasing the restriction to flow when changing from the second state to the first state involves moving a valve toward a valve seat in a direction generally parallel to a line connecting the proximal and distal ends of the implant.

61. The method of Claim 59, wherein increasing the restriction to flow when changing from the second state to the first state involves moving a valve toward a valve seat in a direction generally normal to a line connecting the proximal and distal ends of the implant.

62. The method of Claim 55, wherein advancing involves passing a distal end of the implant between scleral tissue and ciliary body tissue to position the distal end in the uveoscleral outflow pathway.

63. The method of Claim 62, the distal end of the implant is located in the supraciliary space.

64. The method of Claim 62, the distal end of the implant is located in the suprachoroidal space.

65. The method of Claim 55 additionally comprising injecting a viscoelastic material through the ciliary muscle attachment.

66. The method of Claim 55 additionally comprising introducing a hyperosmotic agent into the suprachoroidal space.

67. A method for regulating intraocular pressure, comprising:

placing an elongated implant in eye tissue with an inlet in an anterior chamber and an outlet in a uveoscleral outflow pathway of an eye; and

utilizing intraocular pressure to apply a force to move a valve surface within the implant in a direction transverse to a longitudinal axis of the implant such that aqueous humor flows from the anterior chamber to the uveoscleral outflow pathway at intraocular pressures greater than a threshold pressure.

68. A method of performing surgery to lower intraocular pressure of an eye, comprising:

providing an opening into an anterior chamber of the eye;

inserting an instrument into the anterior chamber through said opening to perform a cataract extraction from the eye;

providing an ocular implant having an inflow portion in fluid communication with an outflow portion;

transporting the ocular implant from the opening through the anterior chamber of the eye to the anterior chamber angle of the eye;

positioning the ocular implant such that the inflow portion of the ocular implant is positioned in the anterior chamber and the outflow portion of the ocular implant is positioned in the suprachoroidal space; and

permitting aqueous humor to flow from the anterior chamber of the eye through the inflow portion of the ocular implant to the outflow portion of the ocular implant and into the suprachoroidal space of the eye.

69. A method for treating glaucoma comprising:

forming an incision in eye tissue located near the limbus of the eye;

introducing a delivery instrument through the incision, the delivery instrument carrying a drainage device;

implanting the drainage device in eye tissue at a location posterior of a scleral spur, without introducing a viscoelastic material into the anterior chamber, to establish a flow path for aqueous humor from the anterior chamber to a physiologic outflow path; and

withdrawing the delivery instrument from the eye;

wherein the incision is sufficient small that it is self-sealing once the delivery instrument is withdrawn.

70. The method of Claim 69, wherein forming an incision involves cutting corneal tissue.

71. The method of Claim 69, wherein forming an incision involves creating a tunneling incision in which a penetration path through the incision is non-linear.

72. The method of Claim 69, wherein the physiologic outflow path is the conventional outflow path.

73. The method of Claim 69, wherein the physiologic outflow path is the unconventional outflow path.

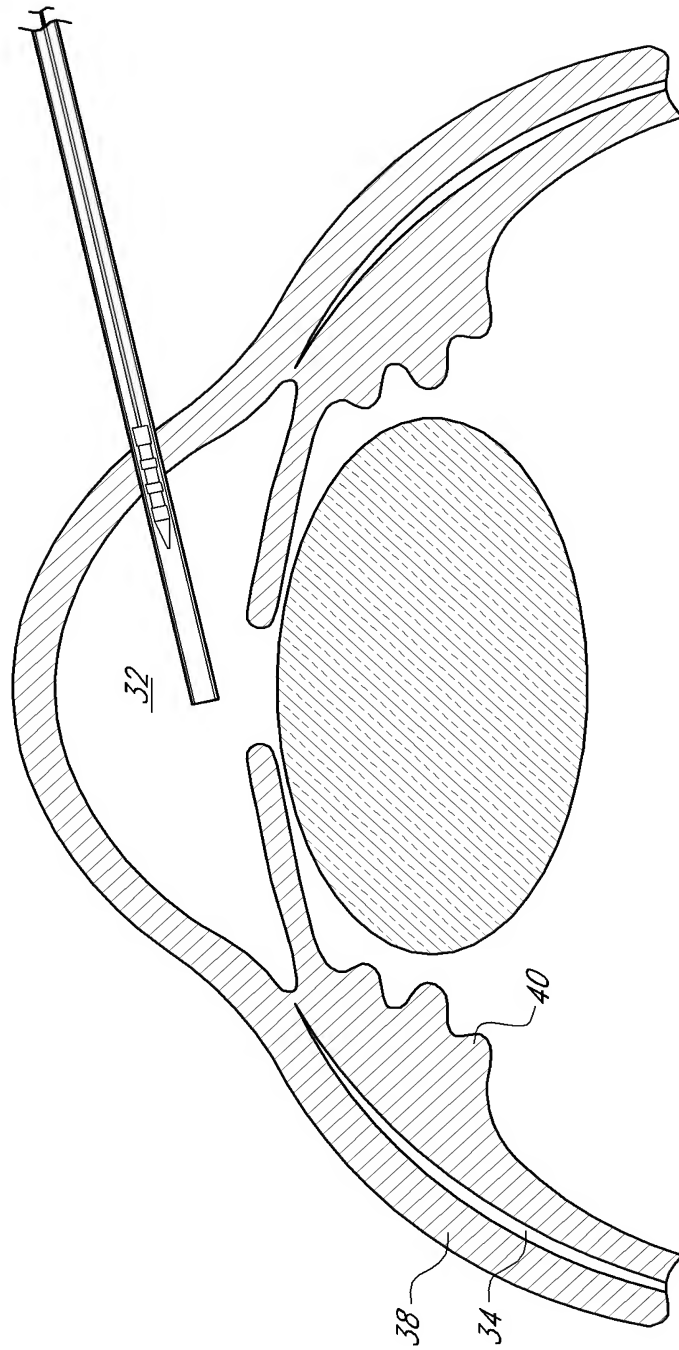
74. A method for lowering intraocular pressure in a patient having at least one ocular shunt implanted in the trabecular meshwork to drain aqueous humor from the anterior chamber towards Schlemm's canal, comprising:

introducing a drainage device through tissue adjacent the limbus into the anterior chamber;

advancing the drainage device across the anterior chamber to a location near the scleral spur; and

implanting the drainage device in eye tissue at a location spaced from the at least one ocular shunt and the trabecular meshwork to establish a flow path from the anterior chamber towards the suprachoroidal space.

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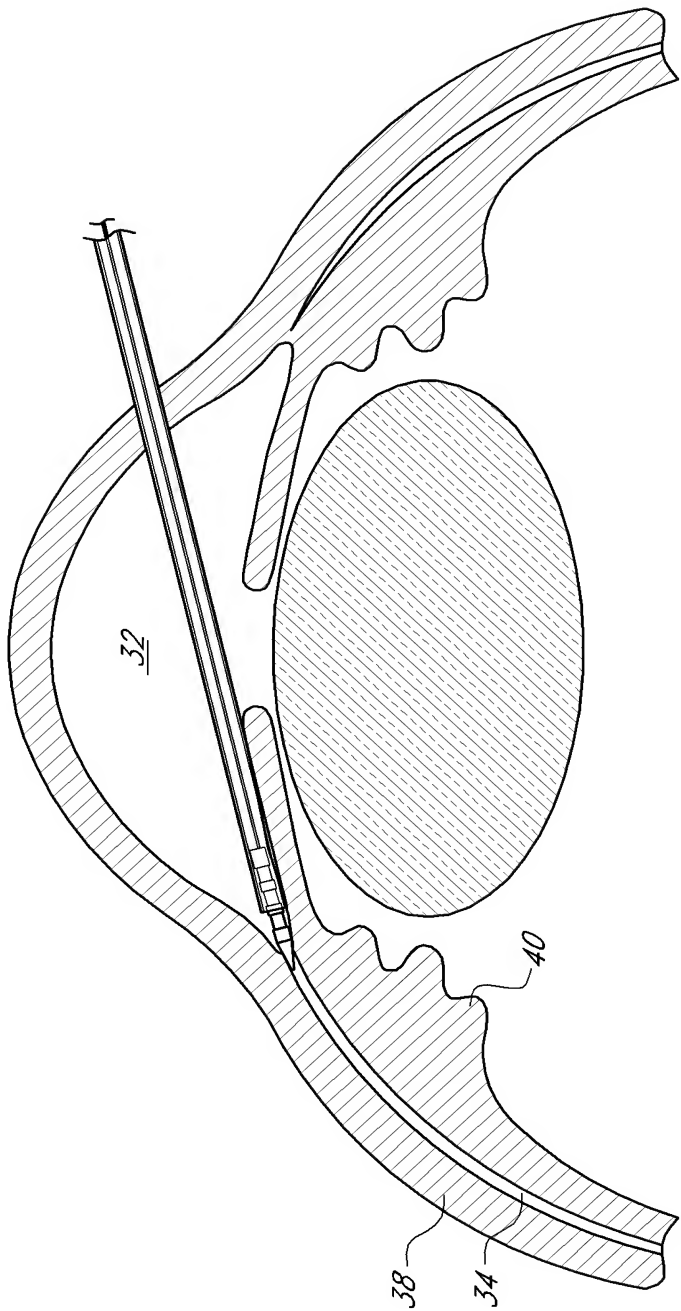


FIG. 2

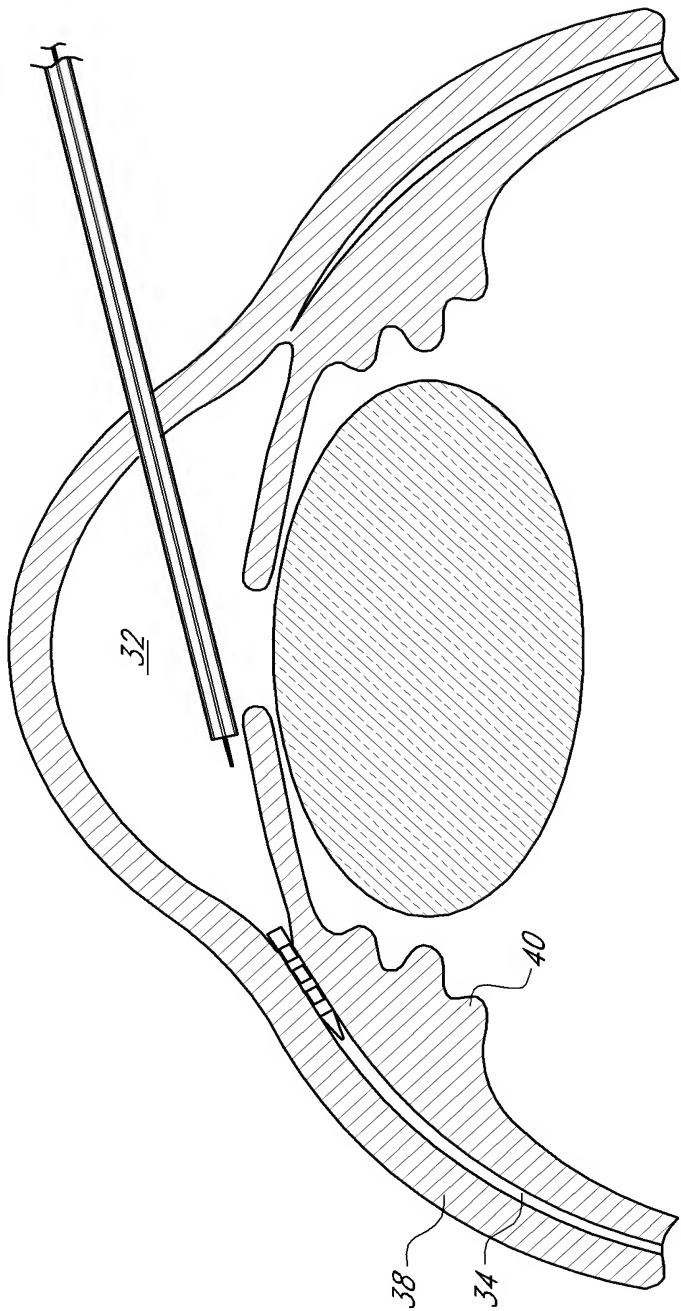
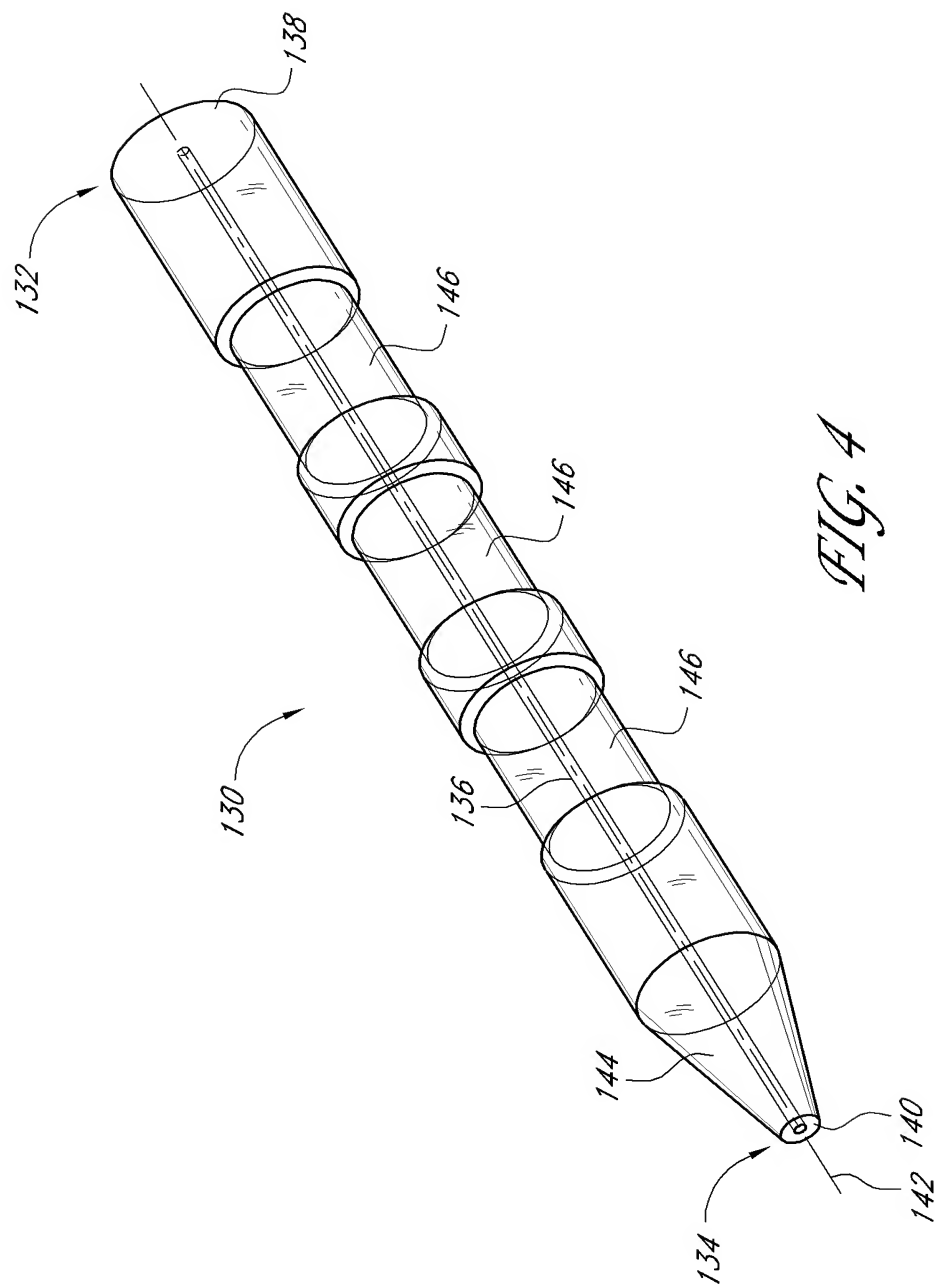
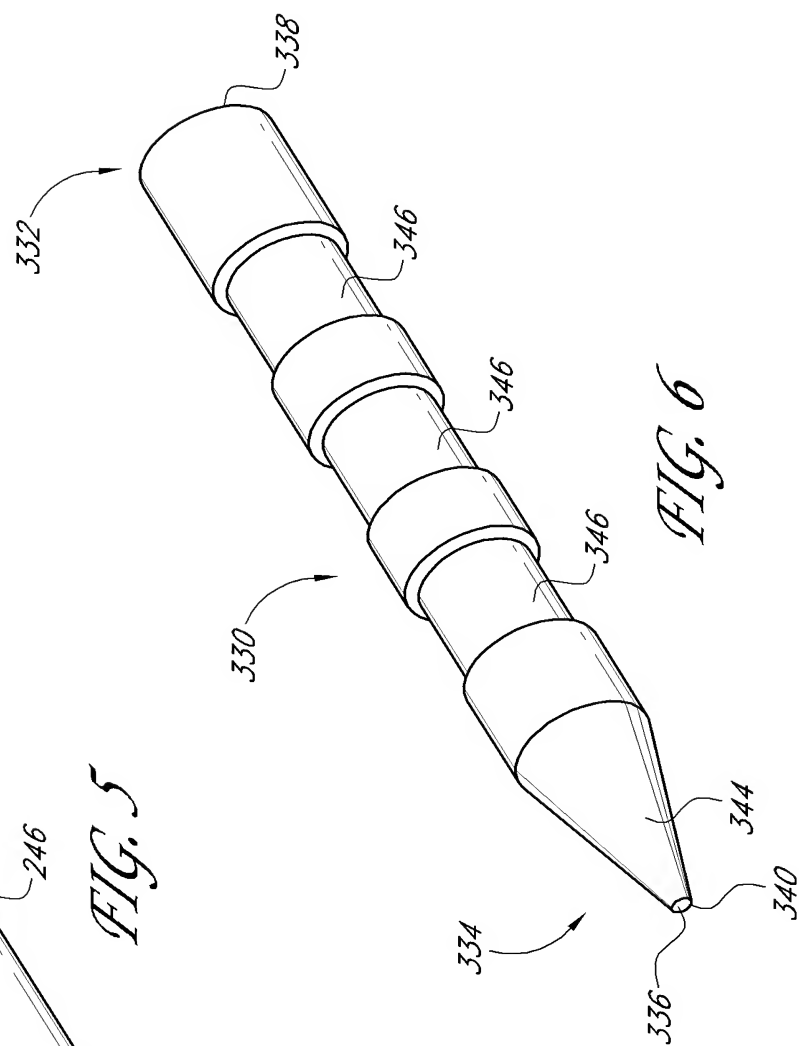
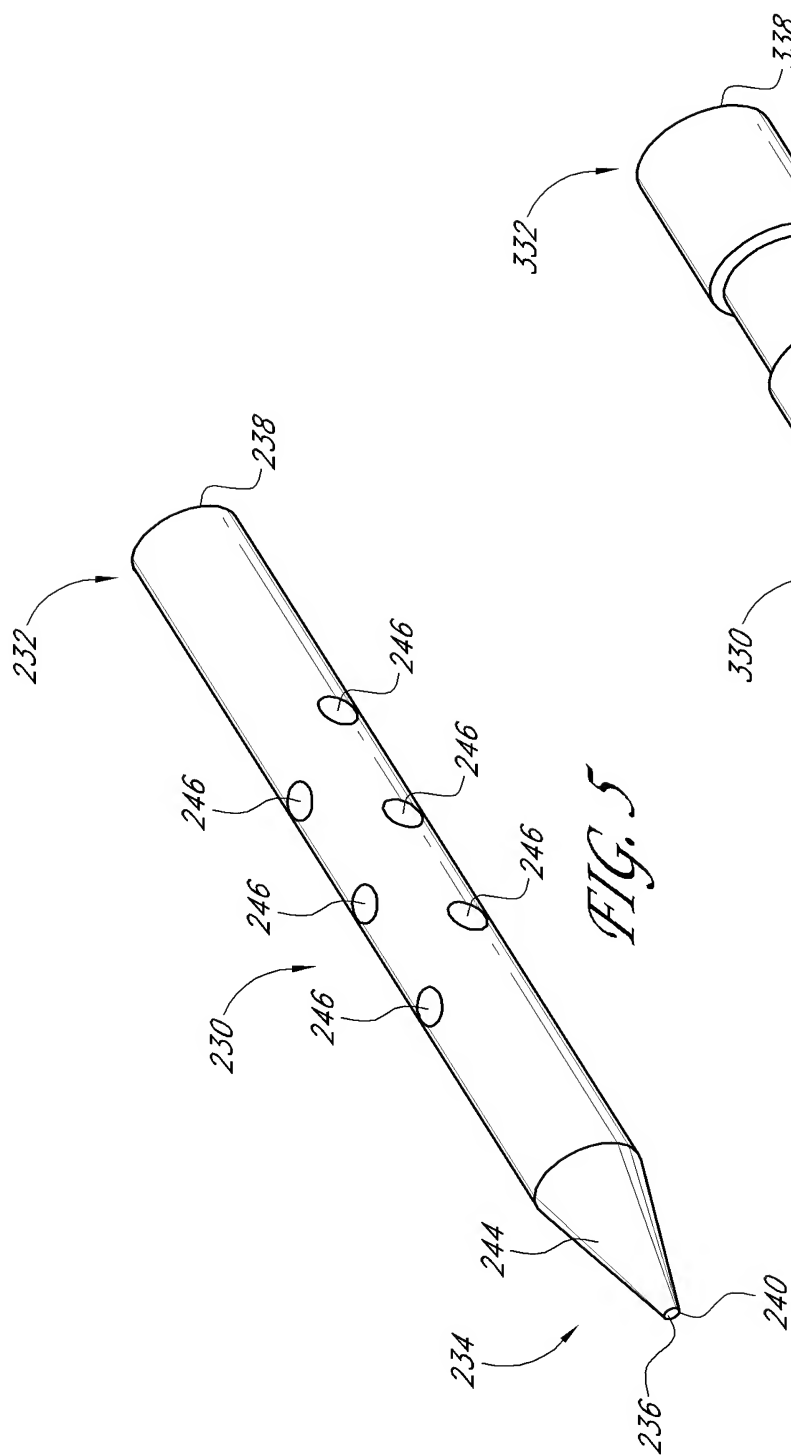
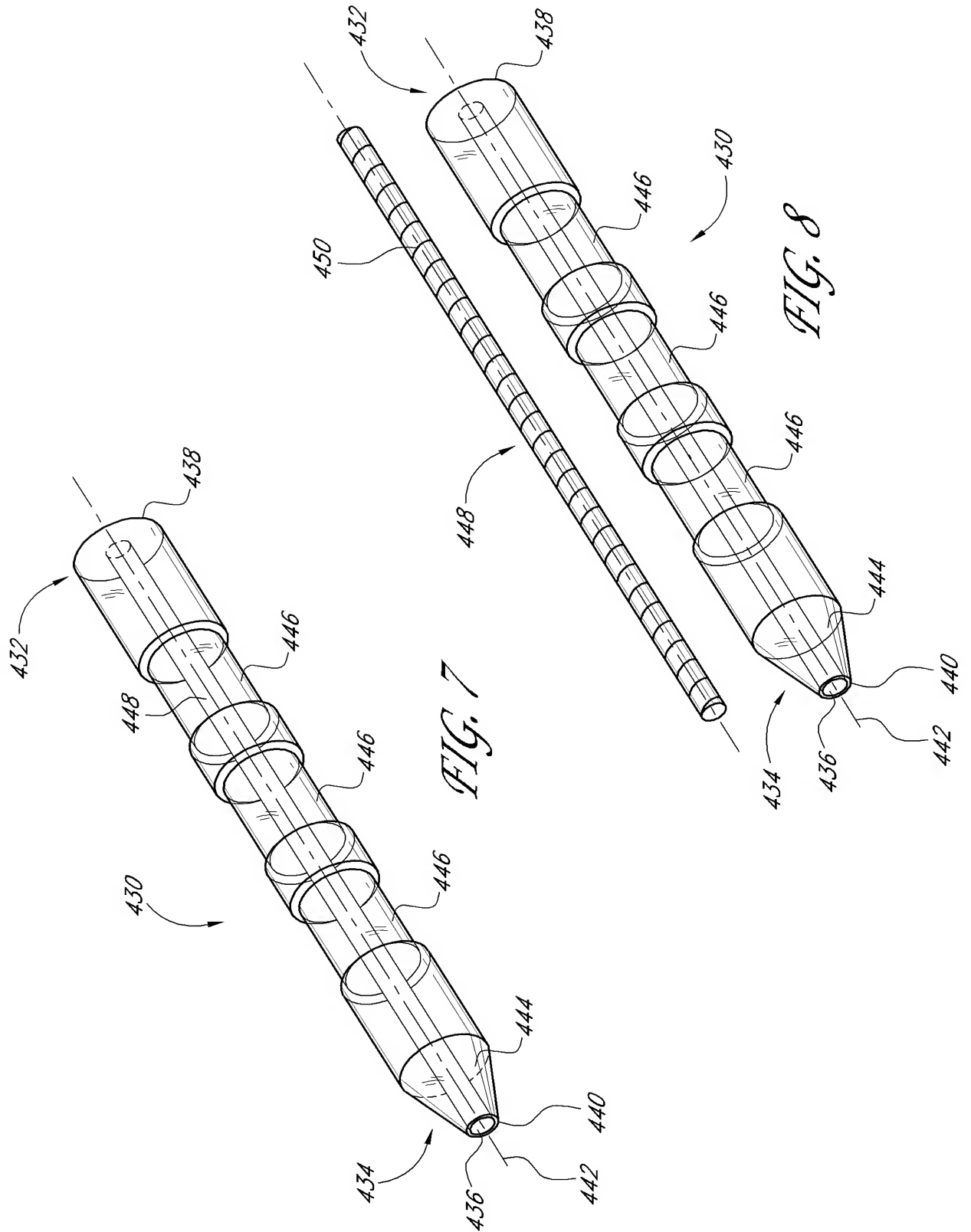


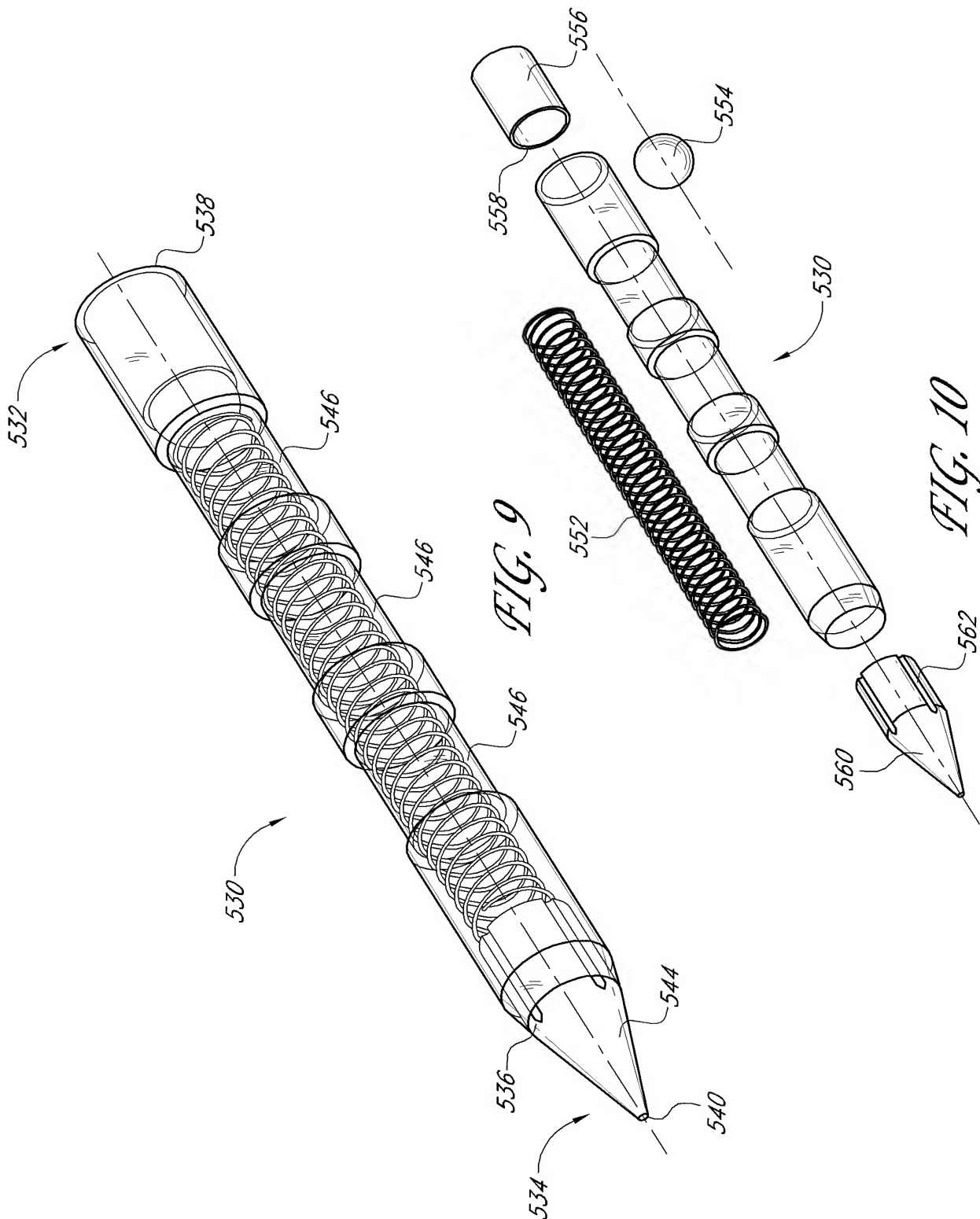
FIG. 3





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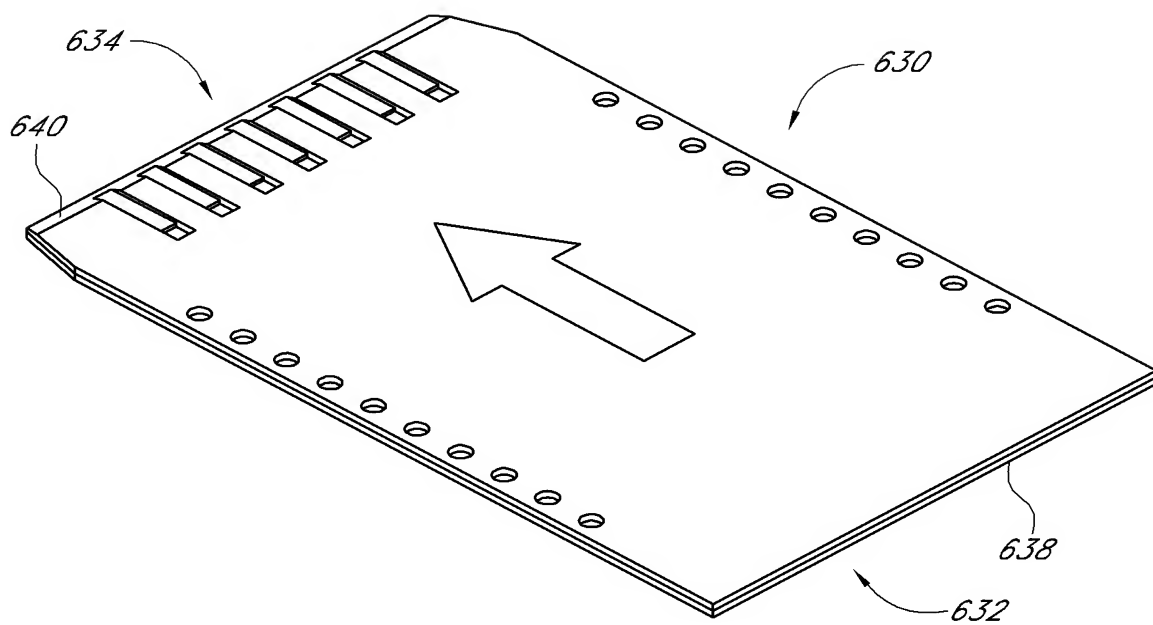


FIG. 11

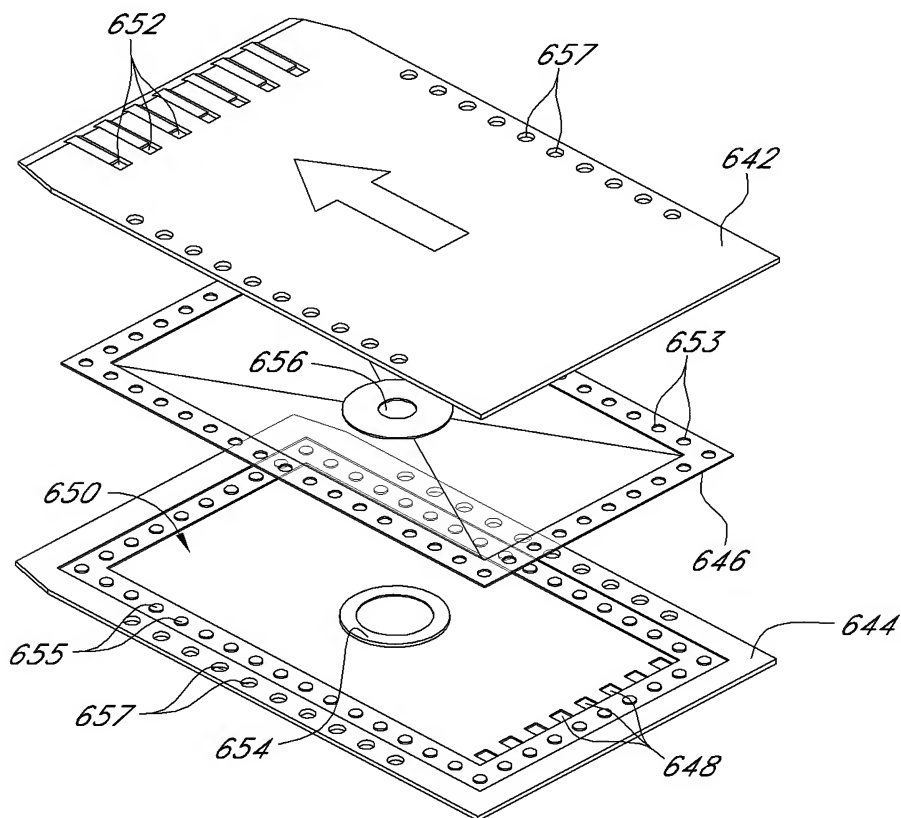
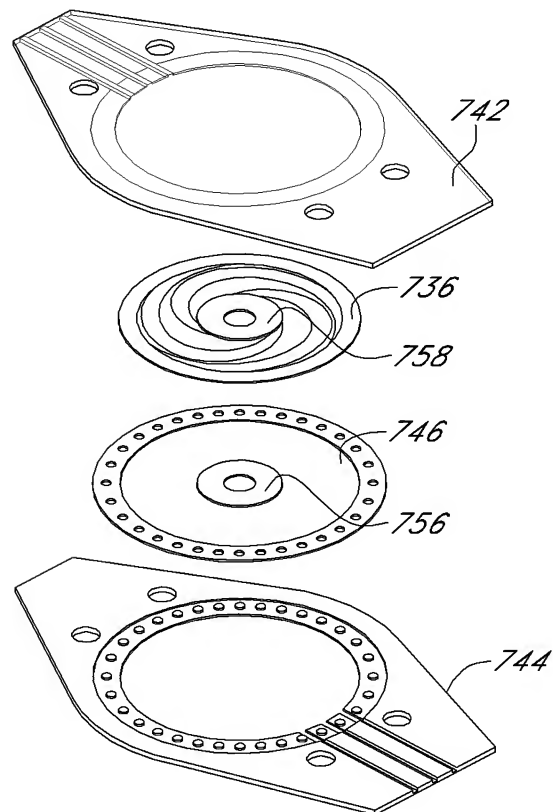
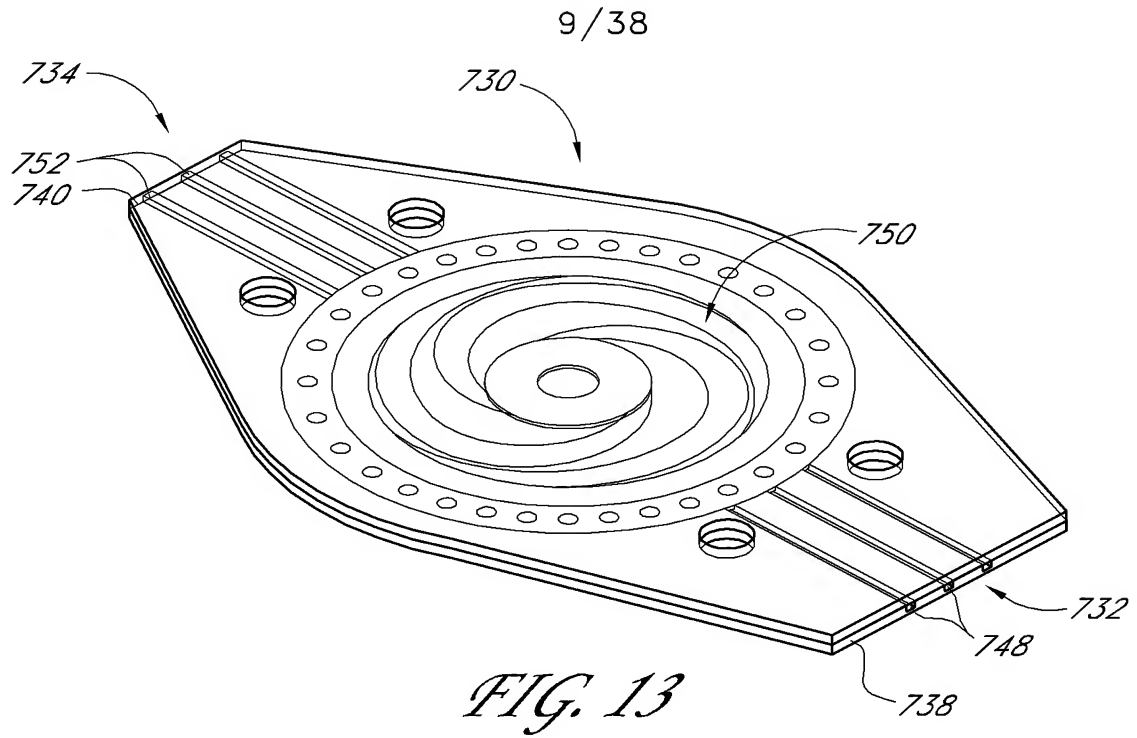


FIG. 12



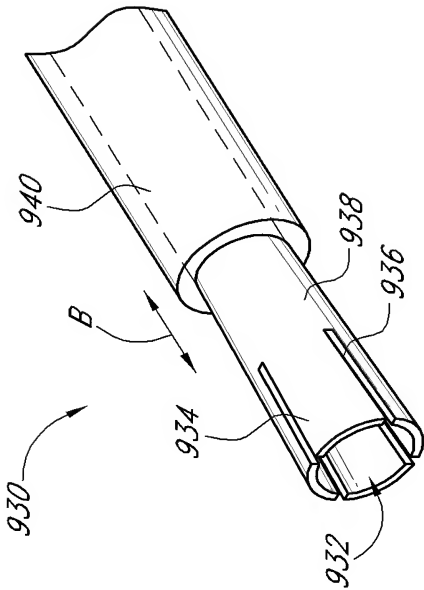


FIG. 15

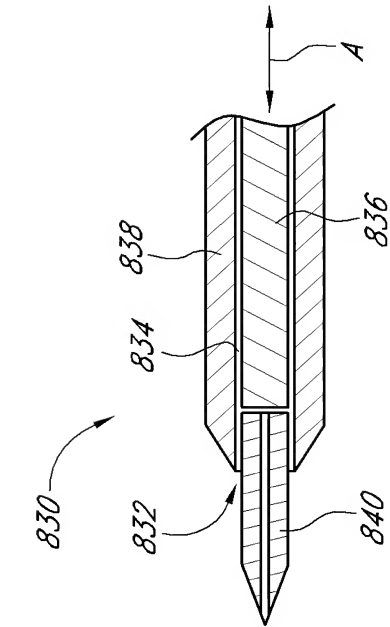


FIG. 16

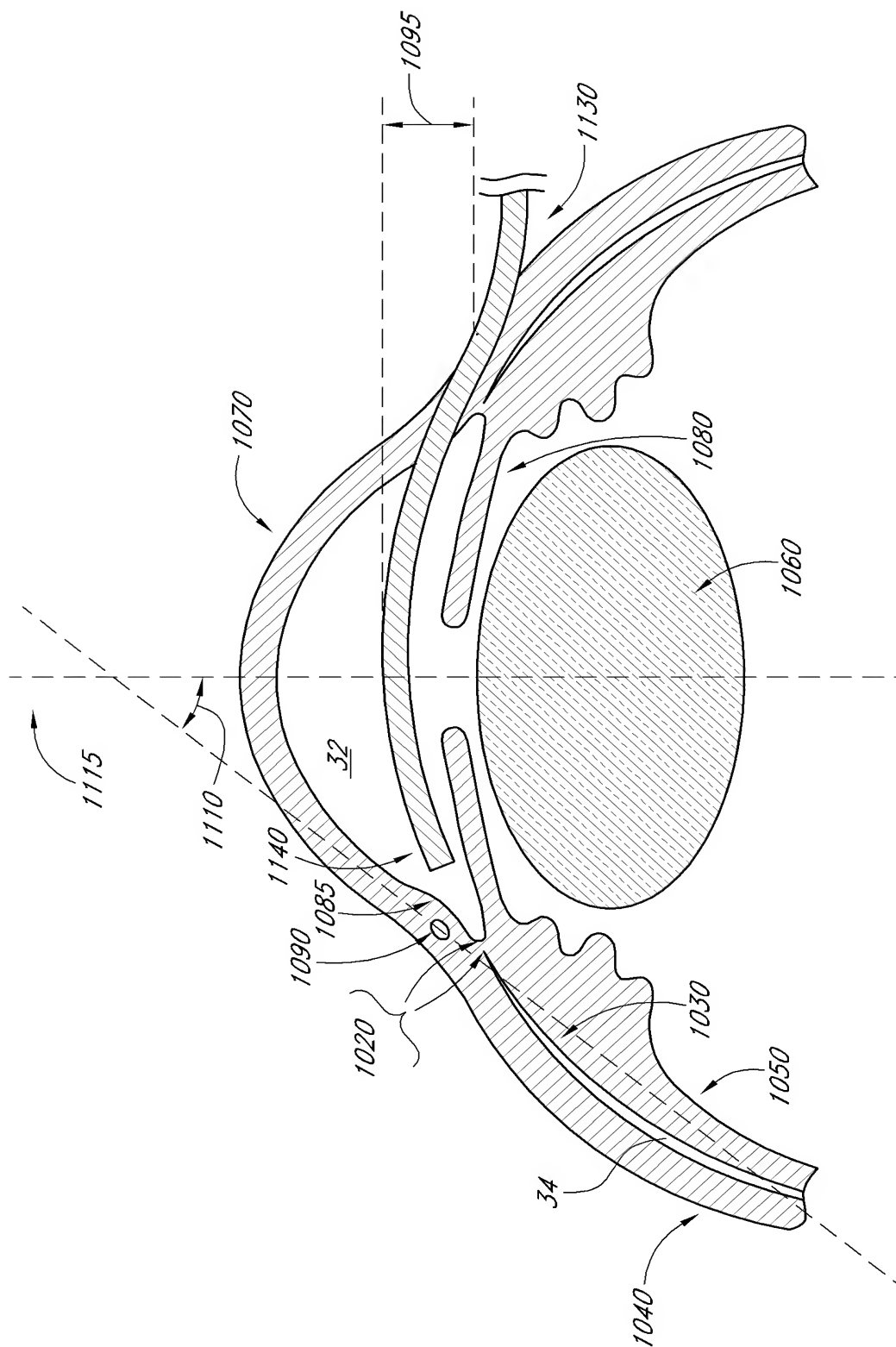


FIG. 17

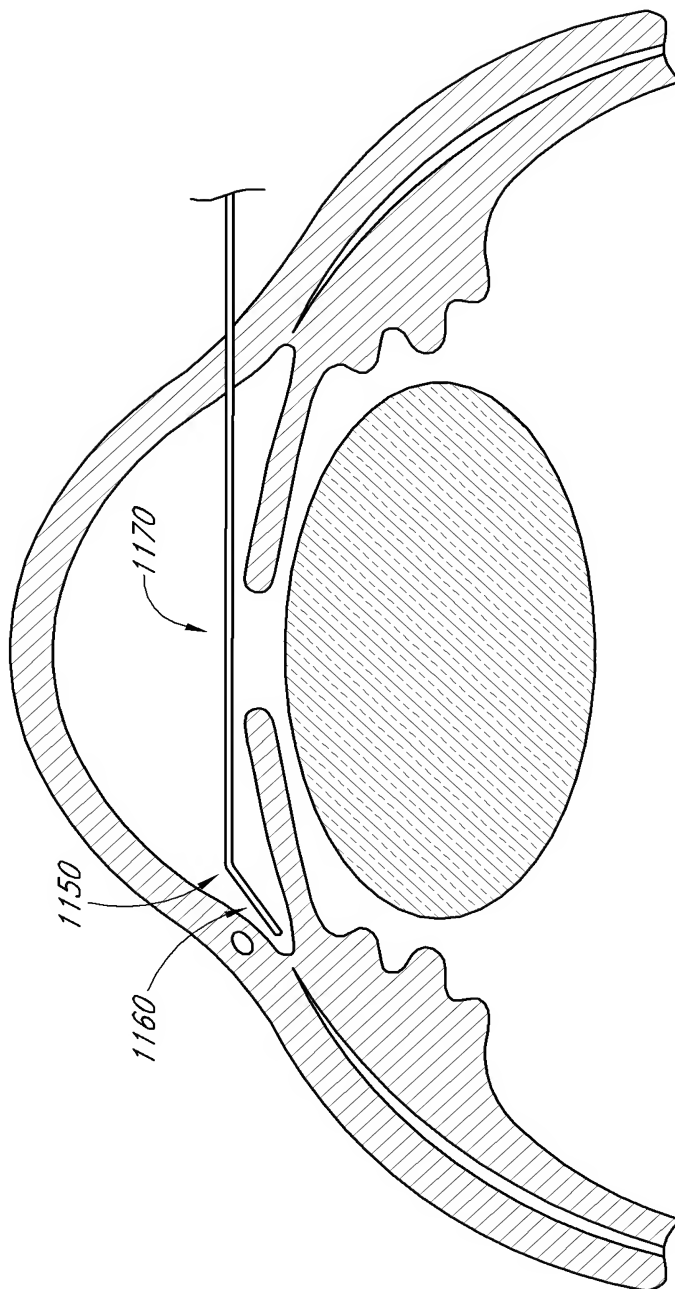


FIG. 18

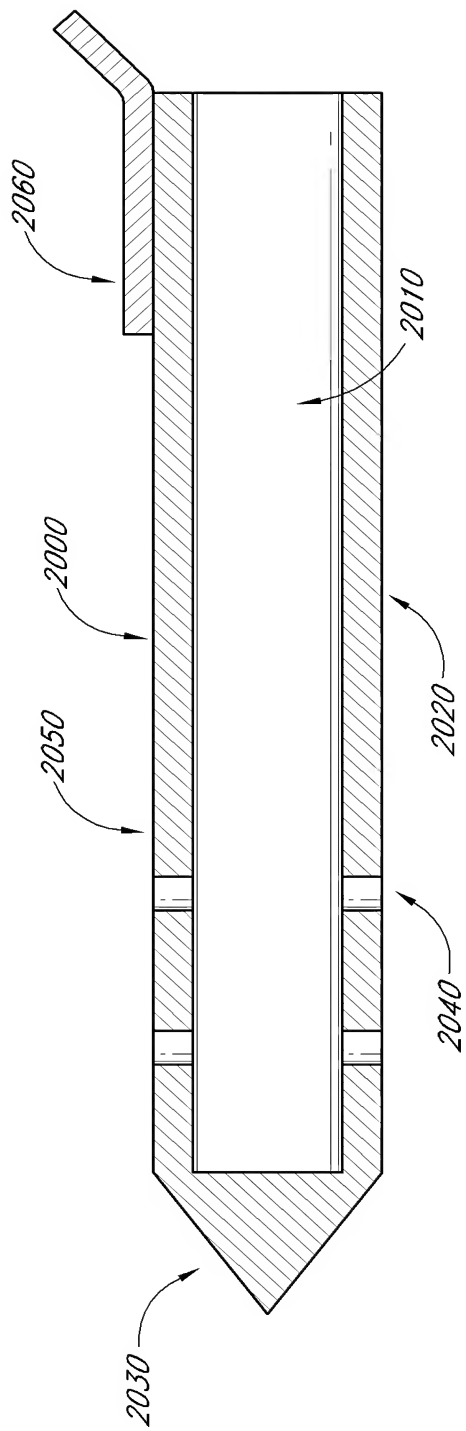
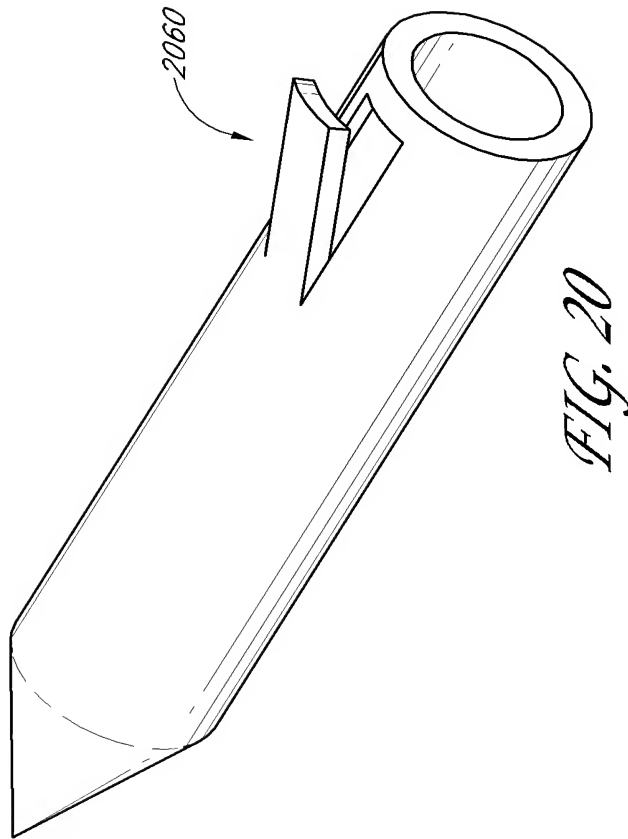


FIG. 19

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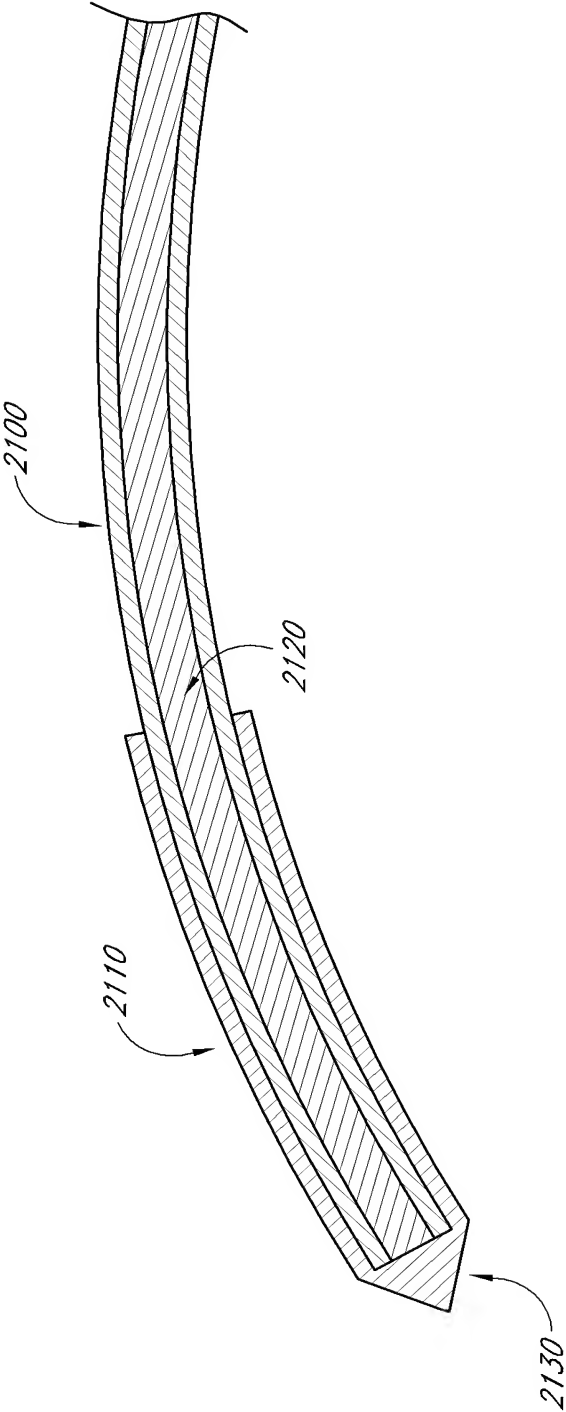
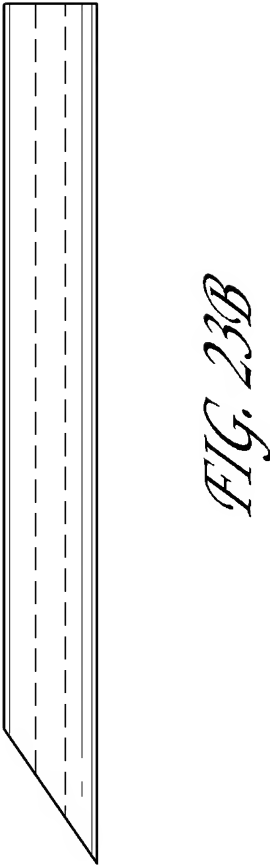
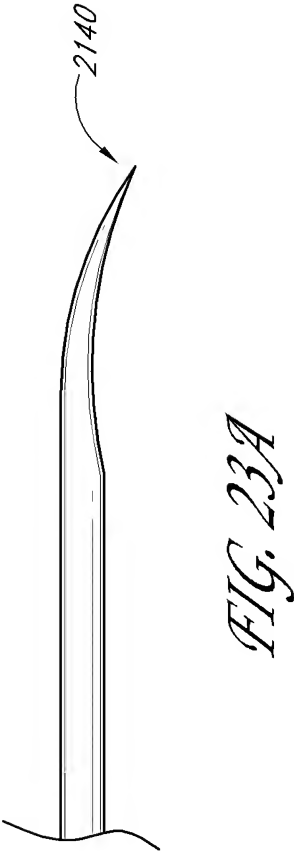
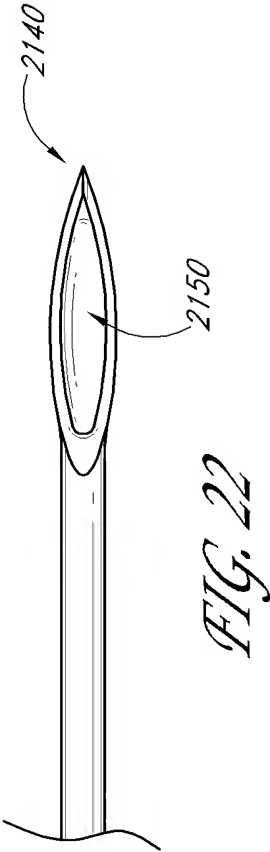


FIG. 21



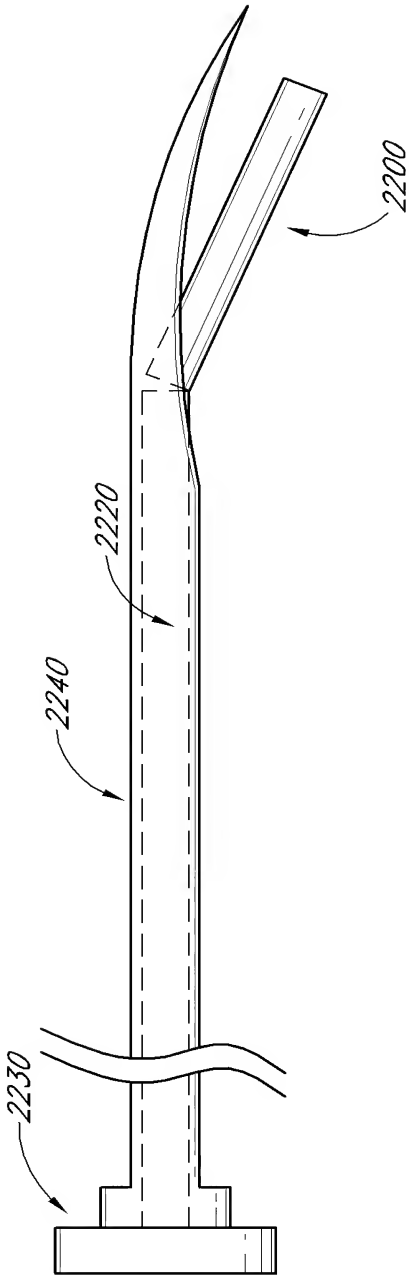


FIG. 24

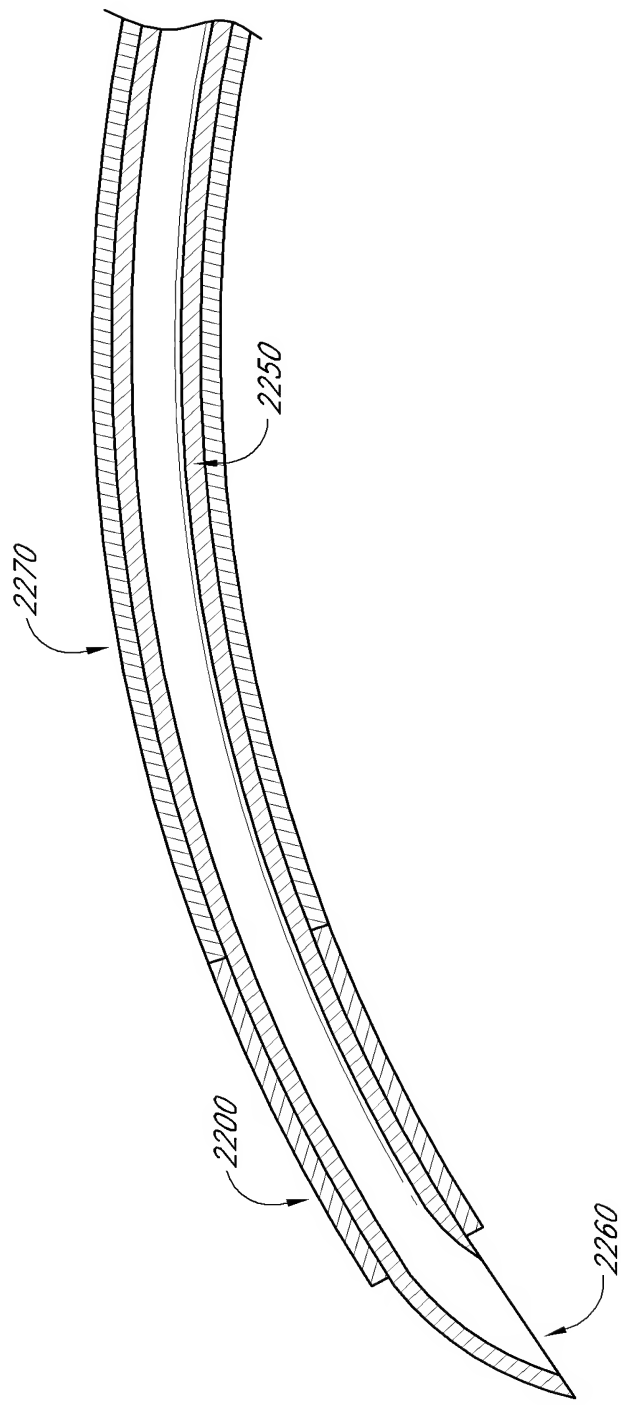


FIG. 25

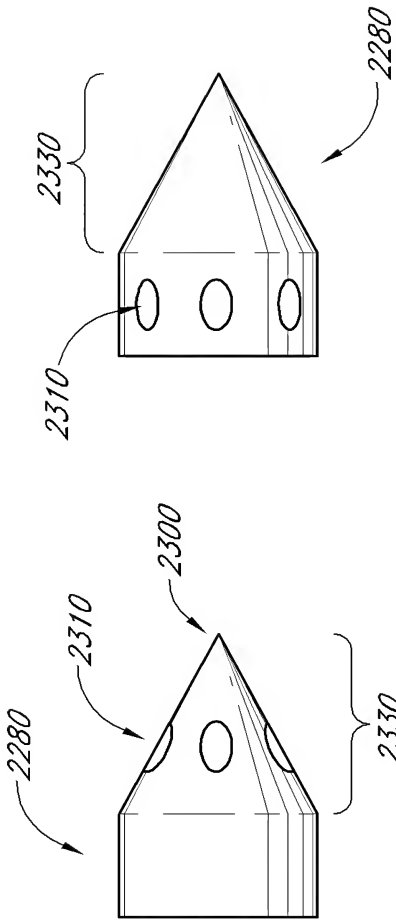


FIG. 26B

FIG. 26A

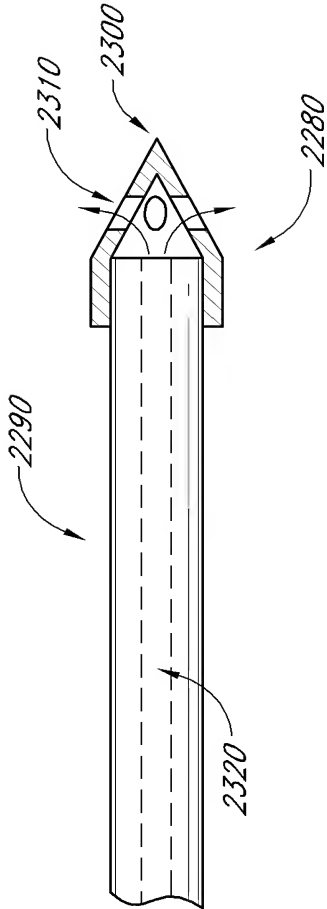


FIG. 26C

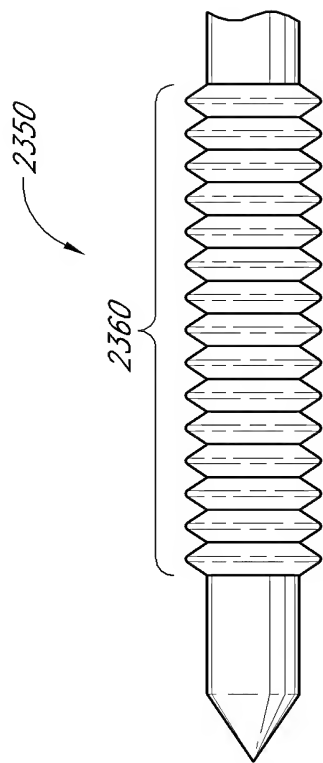


FIG. 27A

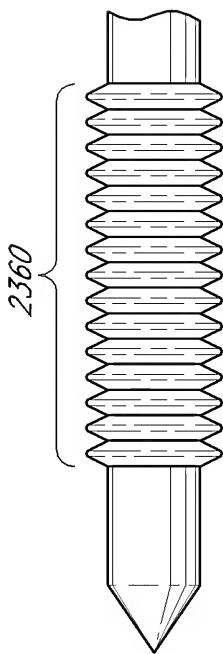


FIG. 27B

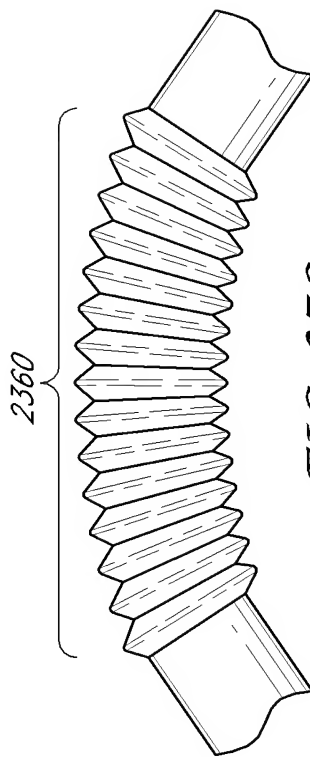


FIG. 27C

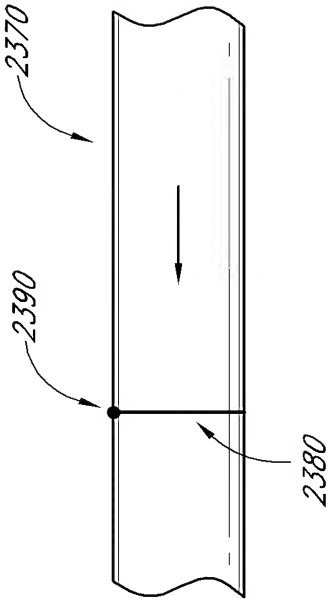


FIG. 28A

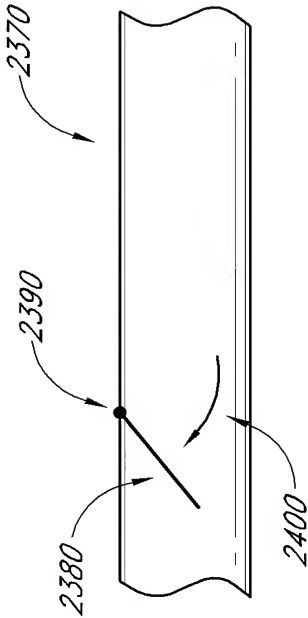


FIG. 28B

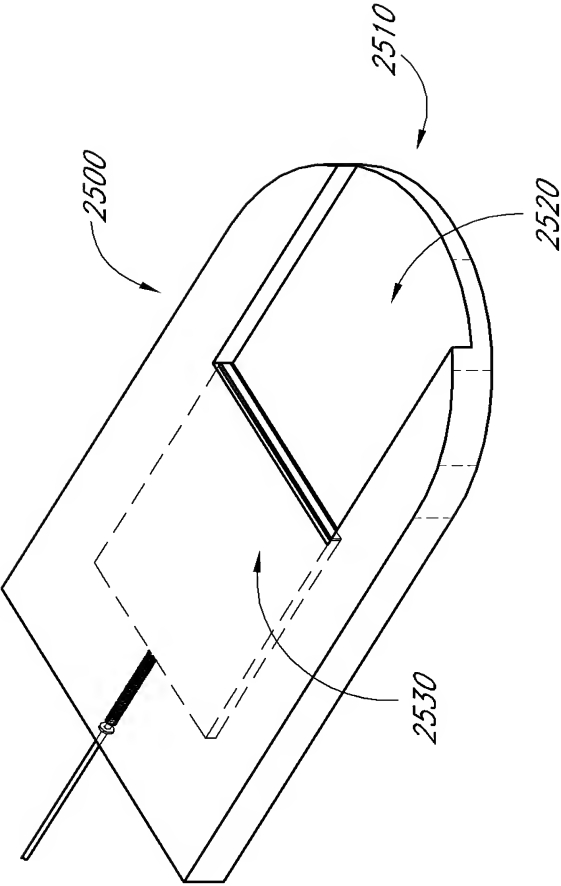


FIG. 29

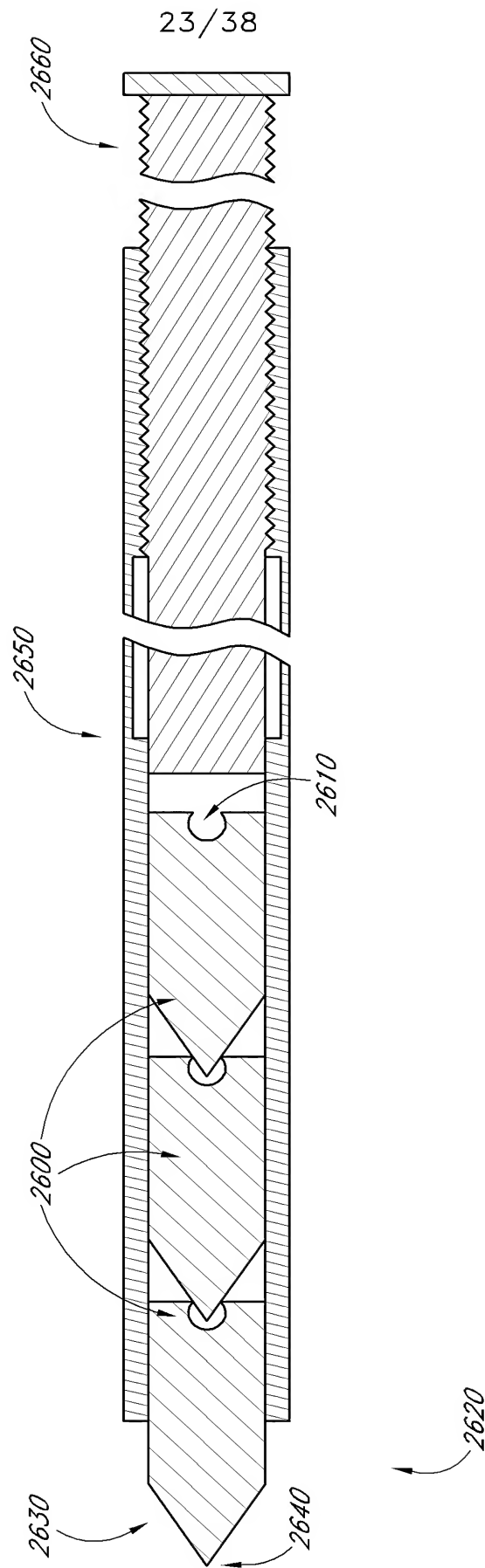


FIG. 30

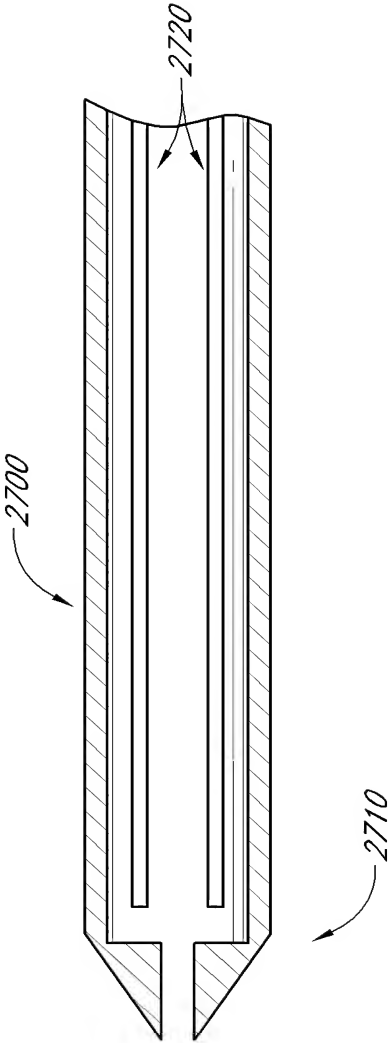


FIG. 31

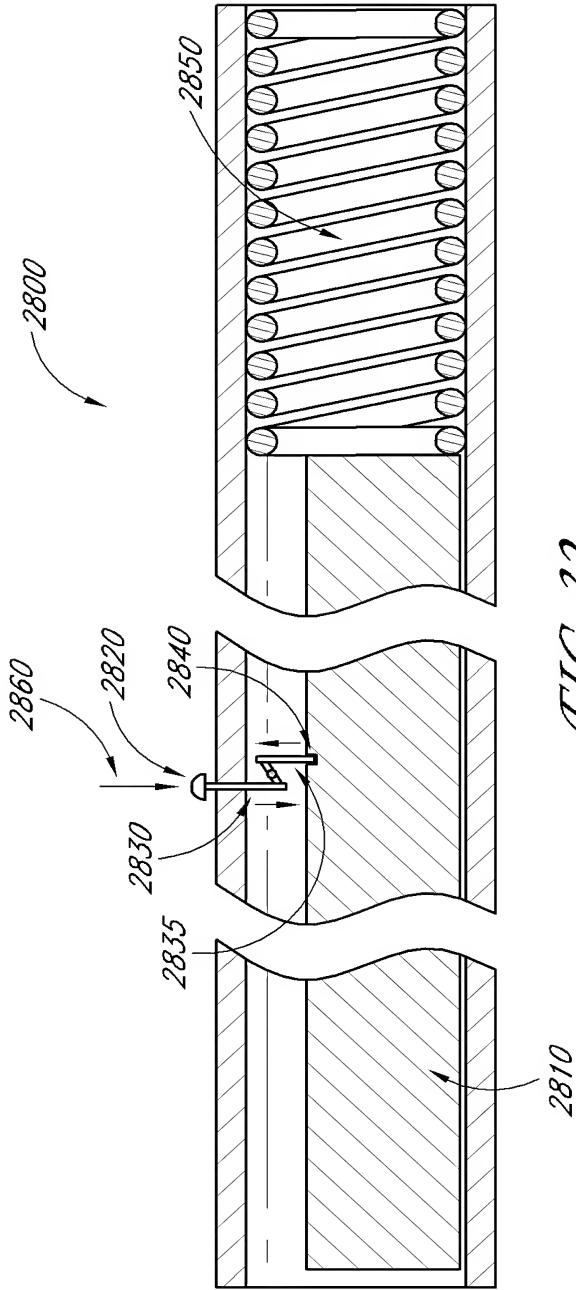
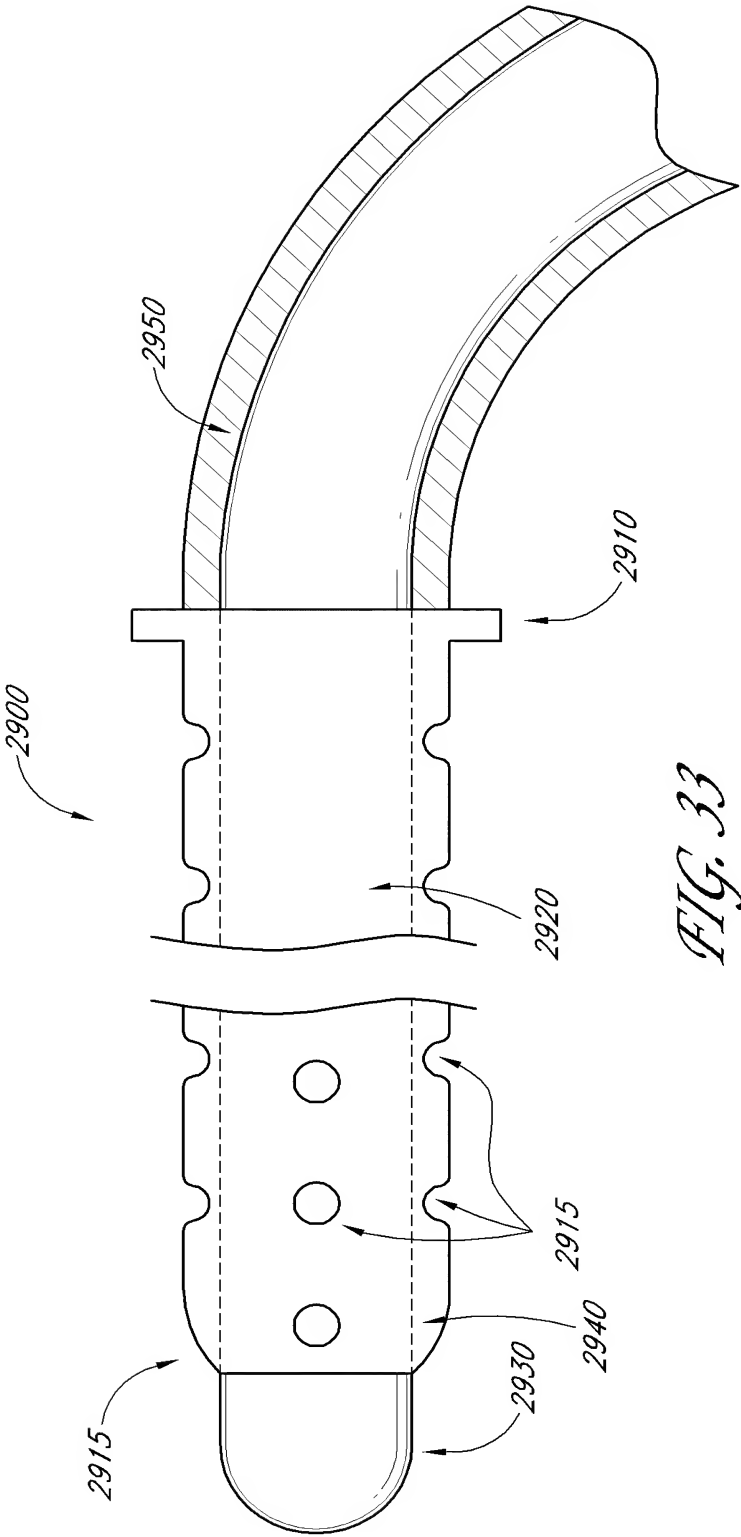
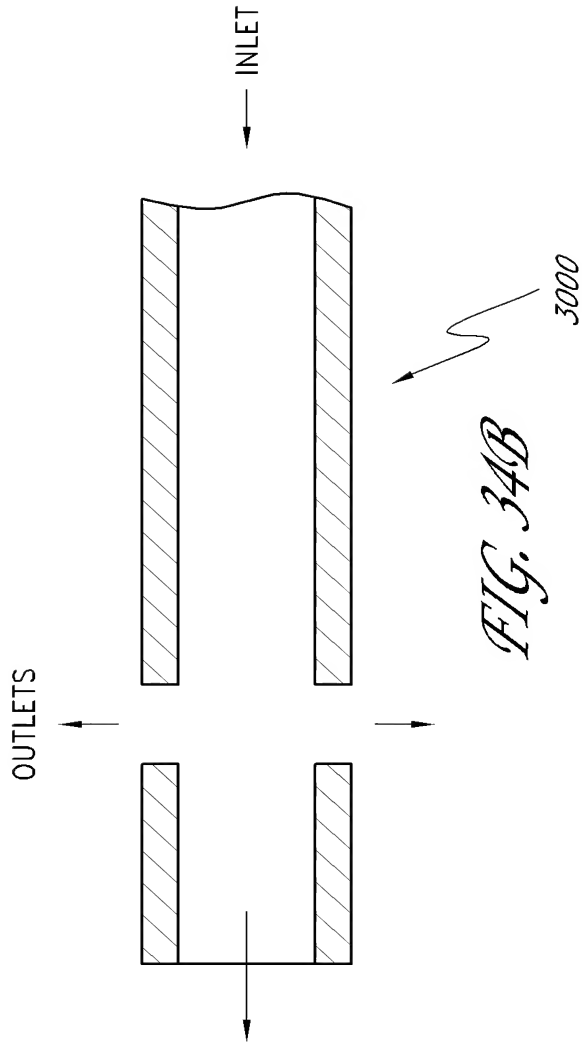
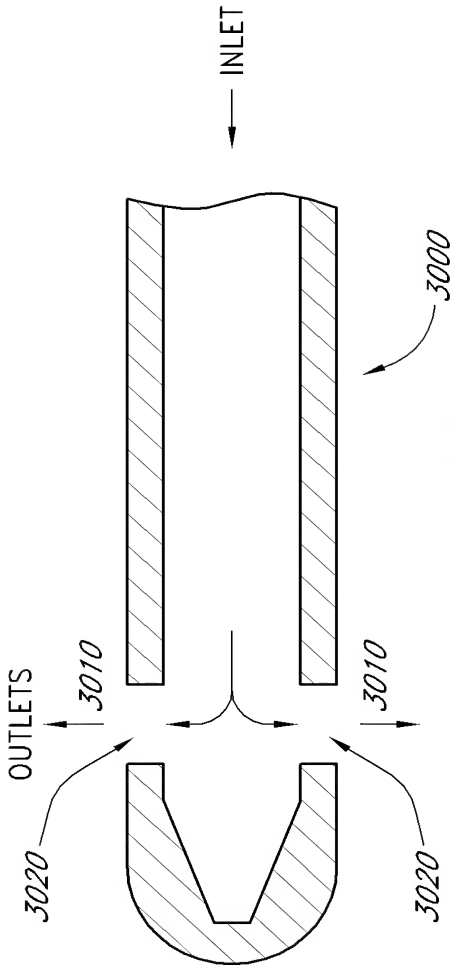


FIG. 32





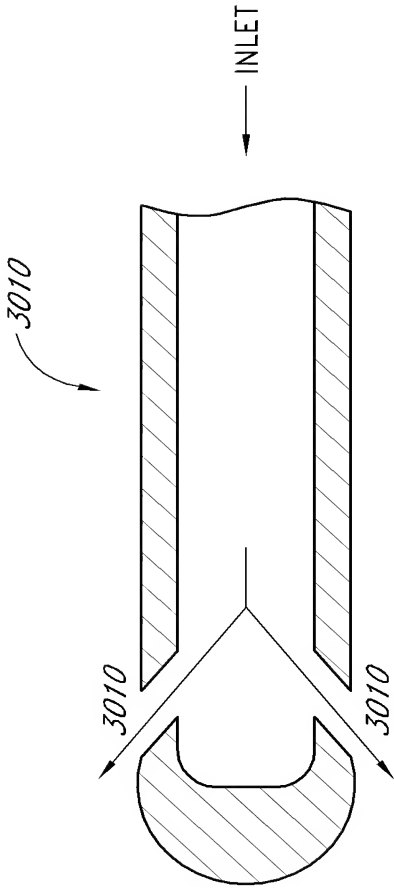


FIG. 35

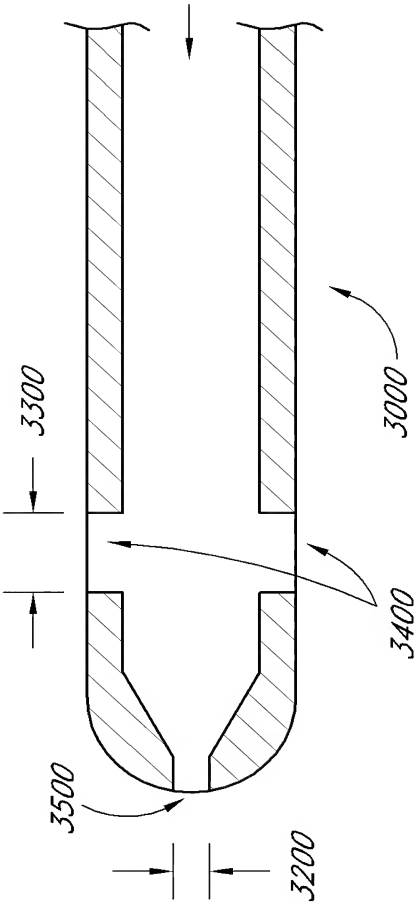


FIG. 36

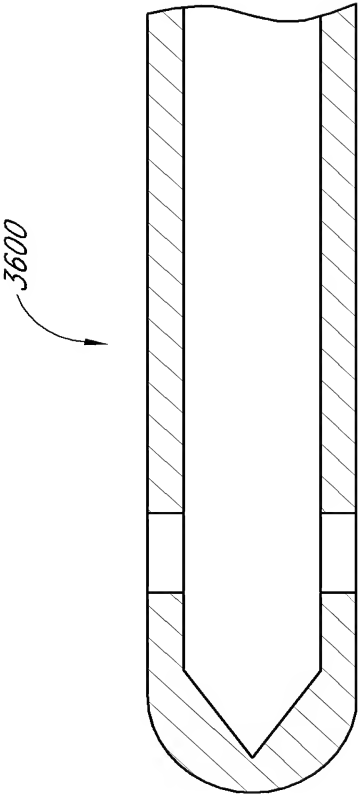


FIG. 37A

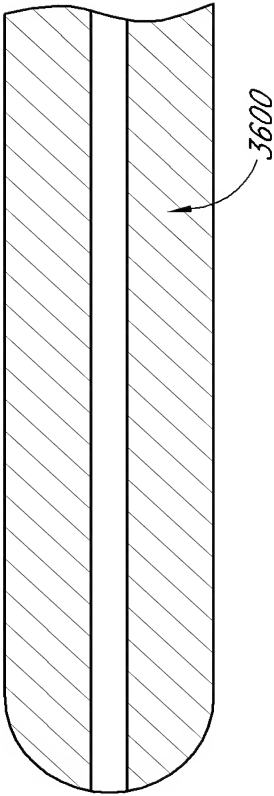


FIG. 37B

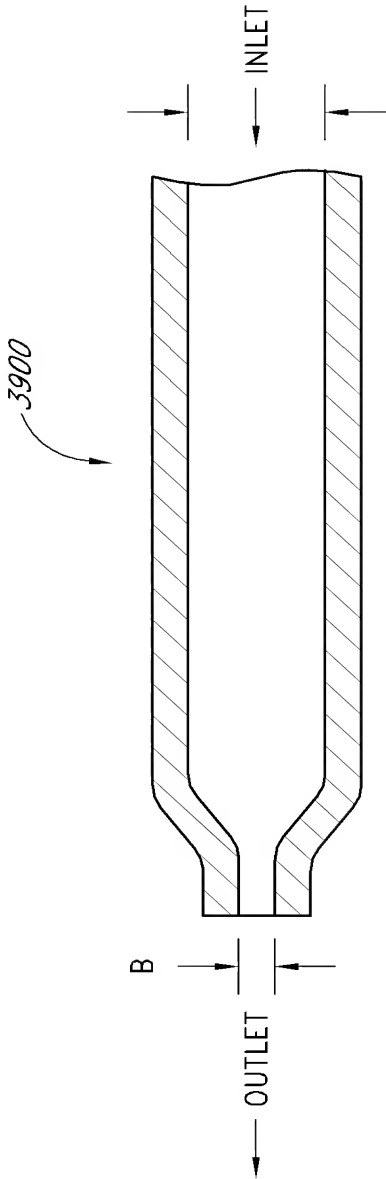


FIG. 38

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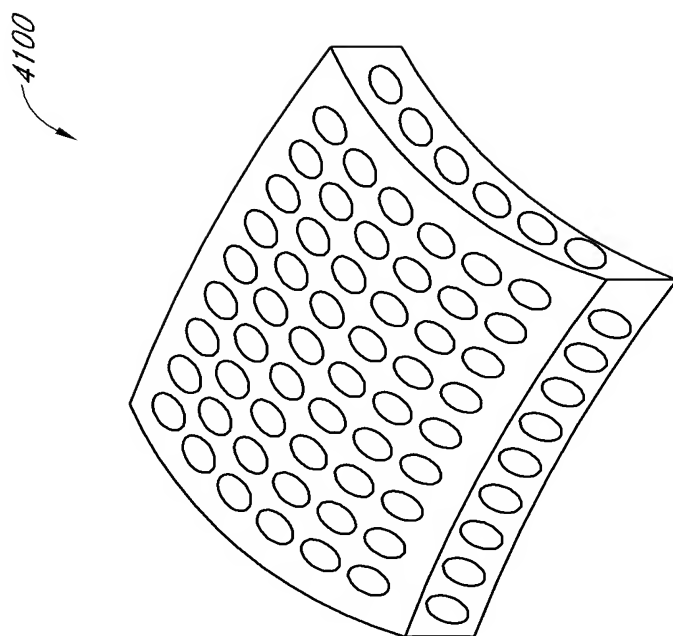
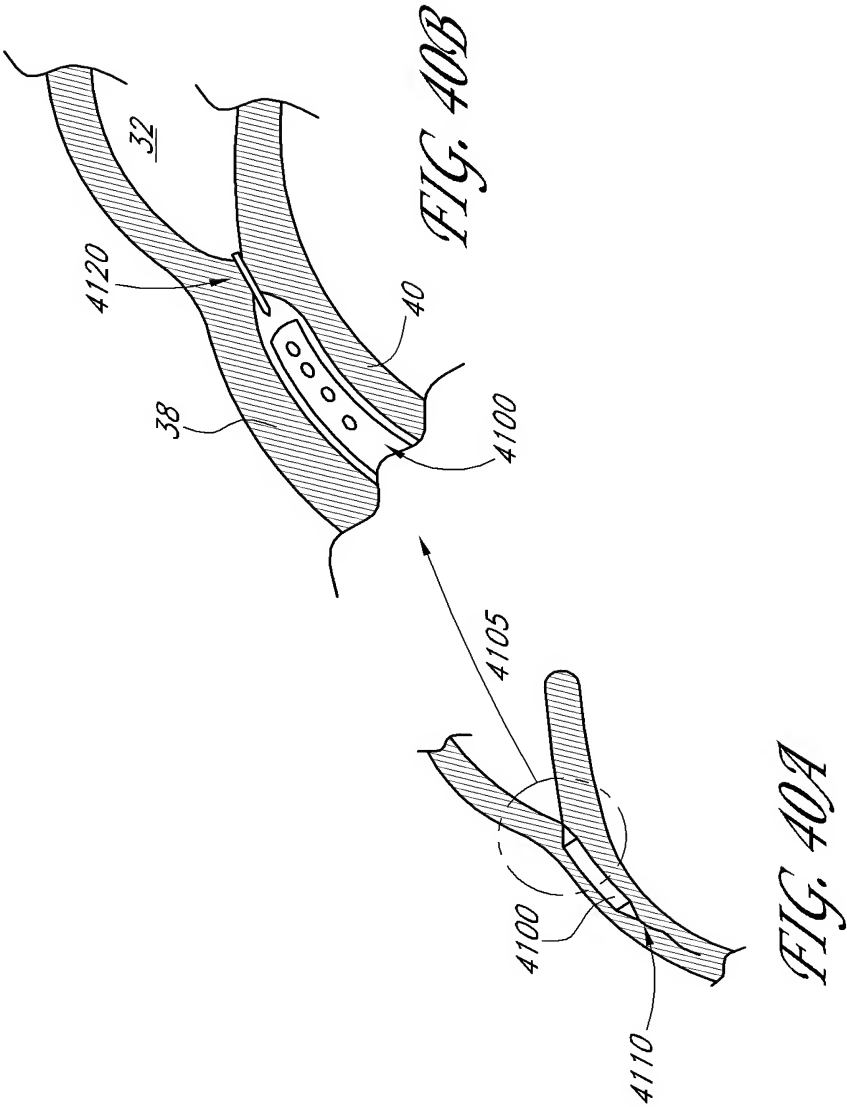


FIG. 39



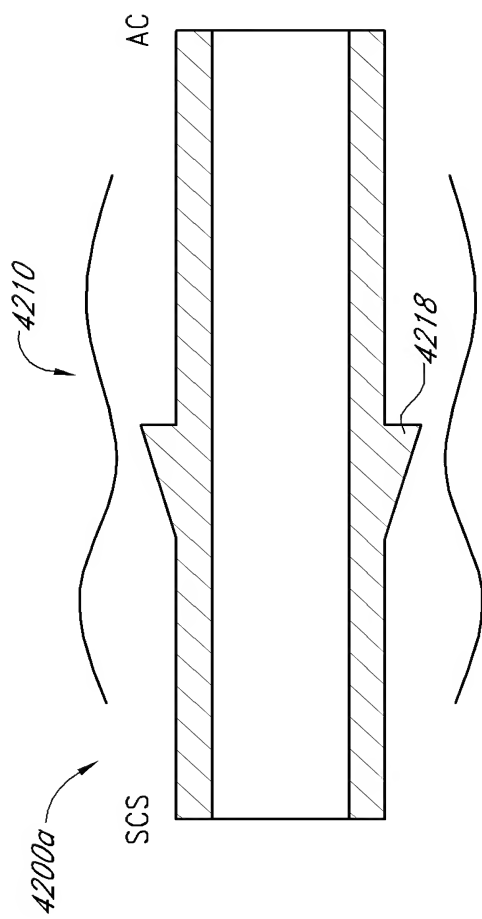


FIG. 41A

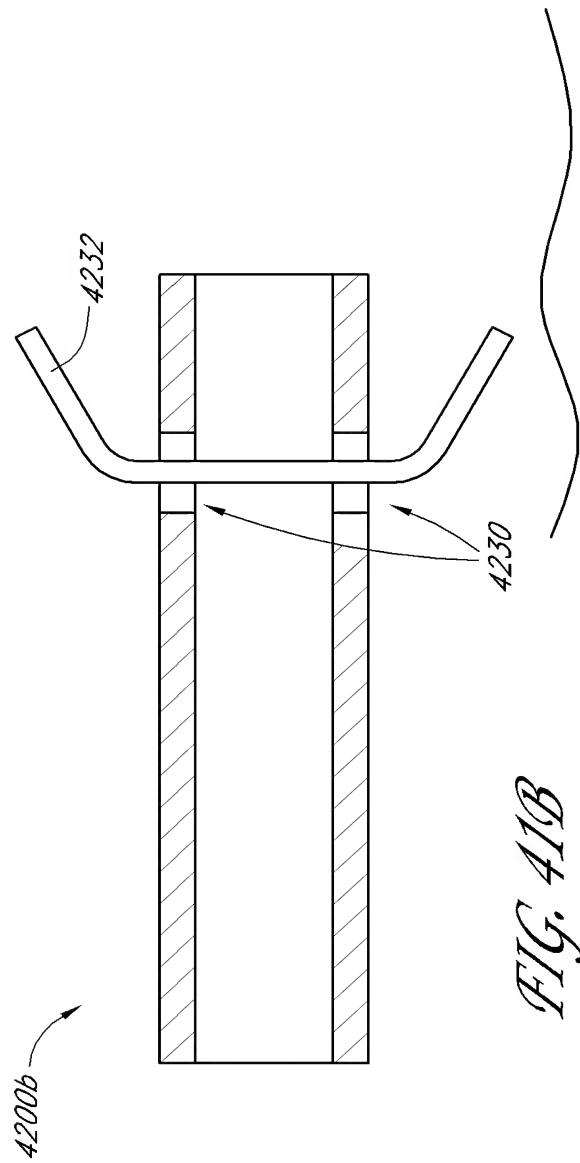


FIG. 41B

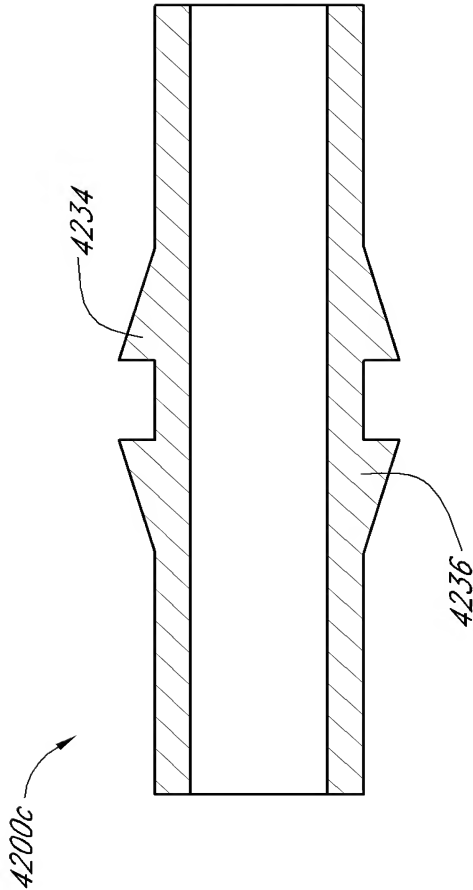


FIG. 41C

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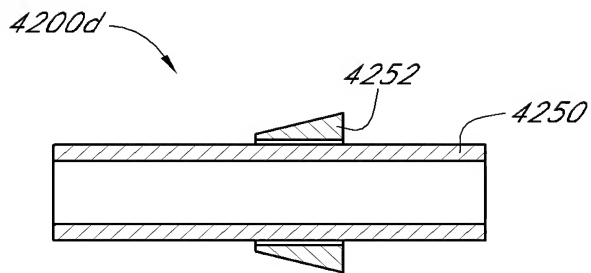


FIG. 41D

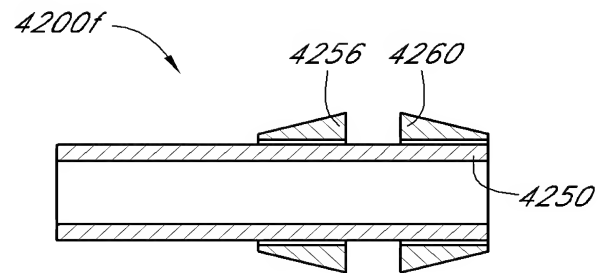


FIG. 41F

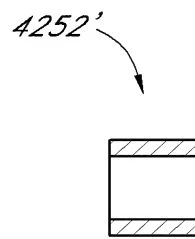


FIG. 41E

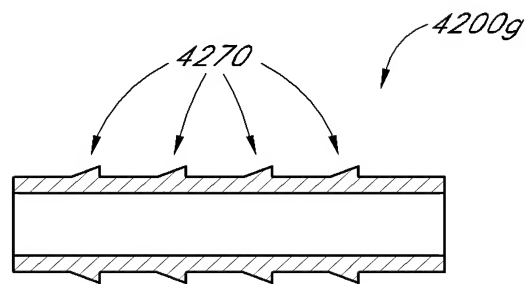


FIG. 41G

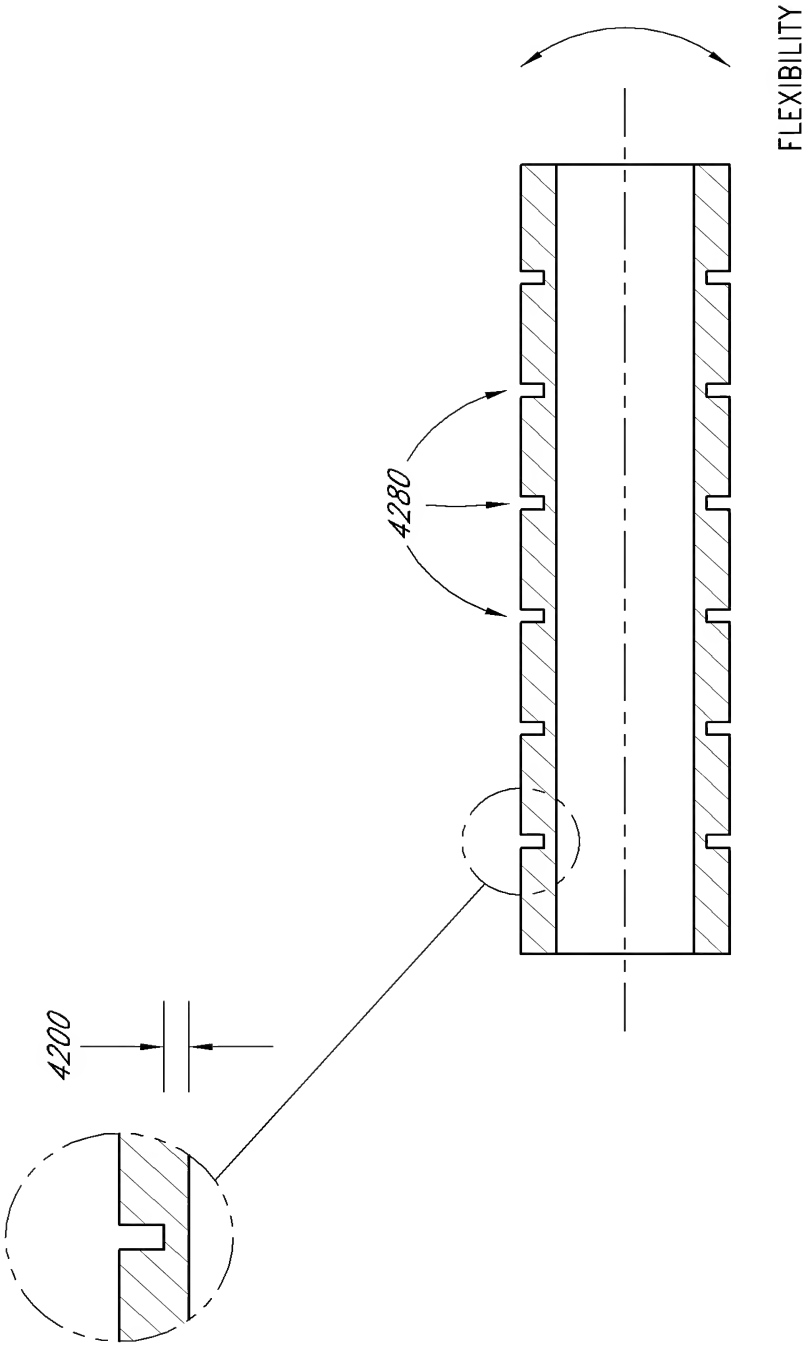


FIG. 41H

